

Team Aruba to compete in Nations Cup today!



PALM BEACH -- Aruba has quite a few outstanding beach tennis players, working hard to raise their level to that of the top players in the world from Italy, Brazil, France, and beyond. On Friday, four of Aruba's best will compete in the Nation's Cup against the top teams from other countries represented in the International Beach Tennis Tournament being held all

through the weekend. Representing Aruba are Cado de Vreede, Dennis Schoneveld, Stephanie Marchena, and Marieke Buuts. Cado de Vreede is 24 years-old. He loves photography, design, and surfing, but most of all he loves to have a good time! "Beach tennis brings people from all over the world together; it is a very social and active sport and I love to be



part of it," says Cado, who, along with his partner Dennis, is Aruba's national doubles champ as well as our singles champion.

Dennis Schoneveld is Cado's partner in crime: the two play amazing beach tennis. Dennis had no tennis background when he started playing 3 1/2 years ago. Last year, when beach tennis switched from normal tennis racquets to paddle racquets, his game took an awesome leap to a new level. Dennis considers beach tennis "the ultimate Aruban pastime". His other hobbies are soccer, windsurfing, and surfing.

Dennis and Cado worked their way up in the ranks from the bottom: first they were Fun champions in 2006, then advanced champs in 2008, and recently they were first in the Pro Division here on the island. Internationally the two are doing great: they reached the semi finals at the New York Open and the quarter finals

at the Bermuda International Tournament.

Fifteen year-old Stephanie Marchena is a most dedicated tennis player. The student is undoubtedly very talented as well. Beach tennis makes her play better tennis, she finds, noticing improved footwork, better volleys, and a faster game. Together with Marieke Buuts she forms a formidable doubles team.

Marieke Buuts, who actually

makes a career as a tennis pro and instructor, shares her passion for traditional tennis with the exciting sport of beach tennis. Agile and very fast with her reactions, arieke makes a challenge for her opponent. She has been dedicating her mornings to practice sessions on the courts at MooMba Beach.

Check out all the action Friday through Sunday at MooMba Beach! ☐



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Sciùè Sciùè, coming into the Palm beach Plaza



PALM BEACH — Owner brings a delicious tradition
Fabrizio Battaglia proudly from his hometown of Napoli

to Palm Beach Plaza Mall in Aruba, when it opens on December 18th.

Meaning “an easy bite” in Neapolitan street slang, Sciùè Sciùè offers authentic Italian finger foods like tris calzoncelli, fritto misto Napoli, stuffed focaccia, and fresh-made pizza.

“Sciùè Sciùè,” says the always-enthusiastic Fabrizio, “guarantees convenience without sacrificing quality, taste, or real Italian tradition.” “Traditional favorites,” he continues, “can be appreciated on the go, in the open air, strolling with friends, or in any other casual setting, which perfectly connects them with the lifestyle and the spirit of Aruba, an island graced by international, modern, and dynamic flair, paired

with tropical, and sunshiny landscapes,” he observes.

Sciùè Sciùè, is the pilot outlet for a Caribbean chain, the menu is color coded, and patrons are invited to mix and match, with easy on the pocket prices. Fabrizio selected to launch the franchise on “one happy island,” at the Palm Beach Plaza.

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AWD employees see first-hand how beverages are made at Balashi



ORANJESTAD - The companies in the hotel and employees of Aruba Wine and restaurant sector on the island, and Dine, one of the largest had a fun outing this week.



The group went en masse to the Balashi brewery, where this popular local beer brand is made. The name Balashi refers to the district where the brewery is located. The name 'Balashi Cocktail' is a joking name for tap water, as the local water plant is also located in Balashi.

The Balashi Beergarden was the place where everyone got together; then the tour began and the interior of the brewery was inspected. The group saw how the bottles were washed and what the production lines looked like. The brewery is almost totally automated, so not many Balashi employees were spotted.

Balashi does not just limit itself to beer: it bottles coca cola, AWA (bottled water) and a soft drink.

For the AWD employees it was great fun to witness first-hand the entire process of the finished products that they serve to their guests.

Photos show the Aruba Wine and Diners at the Balashi Brewery.



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International Beach Tennis Tournament at MooMba Beach will be spectacular!



PALM BEACH - Organizers of this weekend's Aruba International Beach Tennis Tournament, Jochem Ros and Sjoerd de Vries, predict that this weekend will be unforgettable: "The world champions are coming, as well as some of the other top players in the world, so the level of play will be sky high," they say.

Play starts on Friday, November 13 and the finals are held on Sunday afternoon. The awards ceremony on Tuesday evening is held at Aruba Marriott Resort's Stellaris Casino, the sponsor

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of the \$ 4,000 prize money.

More than 200 local players have registered to play and will enjoy themselves on the soft sand of MooMba Beach, where DJs and live coverage from Cool FM will have everyone dancing to the music.

The Aruba International Beach Tennis Tournament is powered by Stellaris Casino, ATA, Amstel Bright, Monster Energy drink, Alno Kitchen NV, Bacardi Mojito, Aruba Aloe, Inter-Assure, Radisson, AMC Unicon, Unipa, Flora, ATV, and Island Temptations magazine.

Plan your weekend around all the fun and entertainment at MooMba Beach where you can marvel at the world-ranked players and cheer on our local heroes. □

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Digicel Pledges US\$500,000 to Hurricane Recovery Efforts in El Salvador

Digicel Employees Join the Recovery Effort to Distribute Food, Water, Clothing and Medical Supplies

KINGSTON, JAMAICA- (Marketwire - November 12, 2009) - Digicel, the largest mobile operator in the Caribbean and the fastest growing operator in Central America, has pledged over US\$500,000 to hurricane recovery efforts in El Salvador in the wake of Hurricane Ida which caused widespread devastation across the country last weekend. Digicel is contributing US\$250,000 to purchase and distribute vital food and medical supplies. The funds will be distributed through NGOs such as the Fundación Salvadoreña para la Salud y Desarrollo Humano (FUSAL), the Fundación para la Educación Social, Económica y Cultural (FUPEC) and the Salvadoran Red Cross. The company is also contributing US\$250,000 in mobile phones to the emergency services and call credit to people in affected areas, as well as providing its customers with free local and international calls on the Digicel network, so that

Digicel customers can stay in touch with family and friends. In addition, from November 11th to 15th, customers in the US who purchase Digicel top up for family and friends living in El Salvador will receive 100% extra free credit. A text donation line has also been set up for customers in El Salvador who wish to make a donation towards the recovery effort. Every text sent to the donation line is worth US\$0.50 which Digicel will pass on to FUPEC. Colm Delves, Digicel Group CEO, comments: "As the fastest growing operator in Central America, we understand our responsibility to help out in times of need. Above and beyond our role in keeping friends and family connected, we are committed to helping people get back on their feet. Our employees have also been actively contributing to the recovery efforts this week with many of them joining rescue teams and

I'd like to thank them for all of their hard work."

ABOUT DIGICEL GROUP

After eight years of operation, Digicel has 8.6 million customers across its Caribbean and Central American markets and is renowned for competitive rates, unbeatable coverage, superior customer care, a wide variety of products and services and state-of-the-art handsets. By offering innovative wireless services and community support, Digicel has become a leading brand in the Caribbean and has placed the region at the cutting-edge of wireless communications -- the

company is also a recent entrant to the Central American and Pacific markets. Digicel is incorporated in Bermuda and now has operations in 32 markets world-wide. Its Caribbean and Central American markets comprise Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Bermuda, Bonaire, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Curacao, Dominica, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Panama, St Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Turks &

Caicos. The Caribbean company also has coverage in St. Martin and St. Barths. Digicel Pacific comprises Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. In total, across its 32 markets, Digicel has over ten million subscribers. Digicel is the lead sponsor of Caribbean and Central American sports teams, including the West Indies Cricket Team and Special Olympics teams throughout the region. Digicel is also title sponsor of the Digicel Caribbean Championships and the Copa de Naciones Digicel, which are the Caribbean and Central American qualifiers to the CONCACAF Gold Cup. □

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*** Human Hints Daily ***

Imagination Sets the Tone of Action

Our thoughts, emotions and actions create the world in which we live, but since we're aware only of our three dimensional expression, we instinctively use the world around us to dictate what is real. One powerful way to turn this situation around, lies in our imagination.

Part of growing up is learning to not use your imagination, and this helps keep us locked into thinking that our environment controls us, instead of the other way around. Now that we are growing beyond three dimensional limitation, we must learn to use our imagination to purposefully create our lives.

How do we begin to turn things around? We cannot shake the ingrained belief that we are products of

our own environment, so let's use that indestructible foundation to our advantage.

When we check our bank account balance, we ask our three dimensional hologram to tell us how much money we have. We surrender our power of creation to our environment. At the same time, it is prudent and responsible to check your balance often, so how do we do that without giving our power away?

By using our imagination, we can change our attitude toward the action, before we take it. We can define and create the energy behind the action before we carry it out. This method is also a direct key to physical manifestation.

Before you check your

account balance, imagine yourself going through the motions. When see and hear your balance, imagine it saying and displaying whatever amount you want it to be. Better yet, imagine it telling you that you are financially abundant, so go have fun and don't worry. Focus on the way abundance makes you feel. Are you more relaxed? Your energy is now very different than before it felt abundance, so become aware of the difference.

Practice this exercise every time you check your account balance, and throughout the day if you're stuck in traffic or have 20 seconds of free mental time. When you set the energetic tone before taking physical action, you tell your three dimensional hologram what to project. You direct the intent and outcome of the action

before it ever happens.

Imagine Dan Rather or Katie Couric interrupting the evening news to announce to the world that you are infinitely abundant and balanced in every aspect of your life. See your name on the Breaking News as it flashes across the screen. Hear them state your name with confidence as they declare your abundance and balance to the world.

This way, we are using our own belief system to validate that your desires are a reality. In our minds, we are setting the energy of the hologram before it is physically played out. We are actively manifesting our lives.

Let your imagination run wild and have fun with this. Concentrate on the emotions that your fantasy

world gives you, and bring those emotions back to your present situation.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

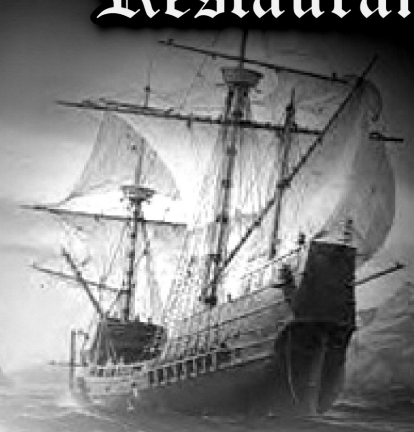
~Quentin Danziger
Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.


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'Special for a Cause'

De Suikertuin sponsors the Aruba Autism Foundation

ORANJESTAD - Following in the footsteps of the first 'Special for a Cause' action at De Suikertuin restaurant is the Fundacion Autismo Aruba (FAA) as its next worthwhile charity. The idea behind this fundraising is that part of De Suikertuin's proceeds of the daily specials proceeds will go towards this foundation, which has as its goal to help understand the illness of autism and provide information, guidance and assistance to parents with afflicted children.

Understanding the specific behavioral problems is key, but because the illness comes in different forms and in various degrees, there is no

standard treatment for autistic children or adults.

At this time there is no cure for autism, but a lot can be done to improve the quality of life of autistic children and adults. The FAA's mission is to provide as much assistance as possible in every way and to try and contribute to reaching maximum development of those with a form of autism.

De Suikertuin's effort is joined by the Arion Wine Company, which also donates part of its proceeds to the cause. So come in and have the delicious Suikertuin Special with a glass of wine and catch two birds with one stone: a delicious lunch with a great glass of wine and the good feeling of helping a worthwhile charity. Thank you! □



Officials mark Armistice Day with wreath-laying ceremony

MARIGOT--Armistice Day was observed on the French side a day early, on Tuesday, so as not to conflict with the St. Maarten/St. Martin Day ceremonies and activities on Wednesday.

The brief ceremony was held as usual in the garden of the Hotel de La Collectivité. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the war memorial honouring fallen veterans.

Préfet Délégué Jacques Simonnet, Senator Louis-Constant Fleming, President Frantz Gumbs, and Gendarmerie Commandant Stéphane Brunet were among the officials laying wreaths.

Also attending the ceremony and laying wreaths were newly elected president of the local St. Martin/ St. Barths chapter of Association National des Membres de L'Ordre National du Mérite (ANMONM) Rose Fleming-Nicolas, President of the Guadeloupe chapter of ANMONM Jean-Claude Montantin, and ANMONM national president Général Francois Koscher, who is also General de Brigade Aérienne □

TODAY
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TOMORROW
Planning for blue



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*Estimated savings compares each U.S. hybrid vehicle's EPA combined mpg rating with its segment average based on latest EPA Trends Report (driven 15,000 miles annually). Actual mileage will vary. ©2009



Moving Forward

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Colombian distributors from the international weight-loss giant Herbalife on Wednesday evening. Herbalife Sales and Marketing Manager for Colombia, Sergio Gamboa received a warm welcome to the Occidental Grand General Manager Jesus Cardoso-Gonzales and crew, along with Sergio's executive assistants, Carolina Garcia and Carolina Herrera. The 250 top-producing independent distributors and retailers of Herbalife products and services throughout Colombia received a grand reception, and will spend six days discovering the Aruba's attractions while networking

Occidental Grand provides the ultimate beach party for delegates of Herbalife



and learning about the latest Herbalife products. All through today the ballroom of the Westin Aruba Resort will host a convention dedicated to those pursuits. Jesus is well known for his charm and wit, and usually takes a turn on



stage personally welcoming all the guests at the Occidental Grand during their weekly beach party, in both English and Spanish. On Wednesday he led the gathering in a special toast to all their visitors with Herbalife, wishing them a productive and enjoyable stay on Aruba!



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*Must be a Players Club member. Must be present to win. All prizes will be paid in Instant Credit. Entry tickets must be printed by 10:00pm and in the drawing barrel by 10:15pm to be eligible for that day's drawing. Drawing drum will be emptied nightly and all tickets will be placed into the grand prize drawing drum. If no winner is present, that day's prize will be added to grand prize drawing on December 1st. See Players Club for complete details.

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THE COOLEST PLACE TO BE IS BUGALOE! Fun and happiness at popular beach bar

PALM BEACH - There is only one Bugaloe on Aruba: it is the hottest place to be cool and the coolest place to be hot.

Friends and fun are the main ingredients at the beach bar, but great food, drinks and music get a good second place. The sunsets, the breeze and the turquoise ocean are right at the top as well, of course.

People from all over the world get together at Bugaloe: they have a few drinks, a bite to eat, they dance and sway and make new friends. If you have gotten curious here and now, check out the website www.bugaloe.com and you will see at one glance what we are talking about. No words will be needed anymore. Surf to the website for the Bugaloe Event Calendar or leave a note in the Guestbook.



The night is young, the world is going crazy and you are right in the middle of a super happening. What's not to like? Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. On Sunday there will always be a **top act** by Tsunami, Robert Jeand'or, Abstract Dawn or Marisela & Aquarius. These musical talents draw the crowds. For more information go to www.bugaloe.com.

Bugaloe is located at De Palm Pier in Palm Beach between RIU Palace and Radisson Resort.

Bugaloe's daily Happy Hours are considered the starting signal for an evening of partying on the island. Locals mingle with visitors and raise their glasses. When you get hungry, order a scrumptious burger, a gourmet pizza, tasty wings or a salad and party on.



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El Sabor de Barcelona @ Casa Tua Barcelona



ORANJESTAD - The food & wine event 'El Sabor de Barcelona' held at Casa Tua Barcelona downtown and organized together with Pepia-Est was a great success! The

Food and Wine pairing was perfect and the guests had a blast, each and every one of them!

Guests were welcomed at the balcony area with Gazpacho, a



cold Spanish Soup paired with a glass of Prosecco. After the reception guests were seated to start their dinner. Appetizer was a Chorizo al Sedra, a tasteful Spanish meat sausage served with a cider sauce. Main course choices were Fish or Meat. The taste of the 'Ballotine Grouper' was to die for and chef's 'sweet ending' was the rainbow sabayon combined with the Mumm Espumante Demi Sec; a real treat to the palate.

Compliments to chef Jacques!

Professional dancers Tita & Jennifer performed a great live flamenco show where guests were invited to join on stage. Claudia did a fabulous job as a dancer and so did Jim (see picture) time share owner at Playa Linda and a regular guest of Aruba for many years.

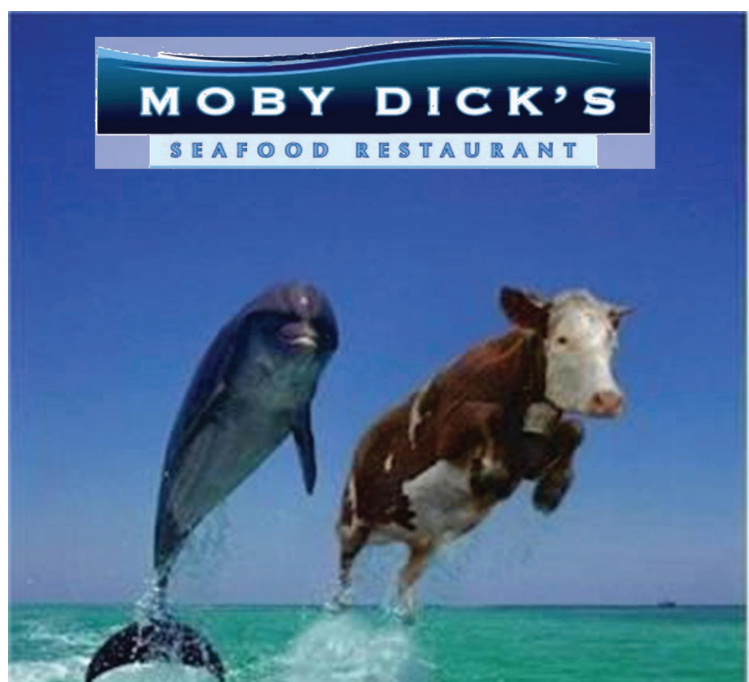
In between of the courses guests were invited to join a bottle painting contest and participation was huge! Like real artists they started painting and could only be stopped when the main courses were served.

Pepia's Sanne treated the winner to a nice wine bucket holding 3 of the wines served that night. David Nataf handed



out Gift Certificates for all participants at the wine bottle painting activity as a token of appreciation.

A great evening with a great audience! So, do not miss out an event at Casa Tua Barcelona next time!! ☐

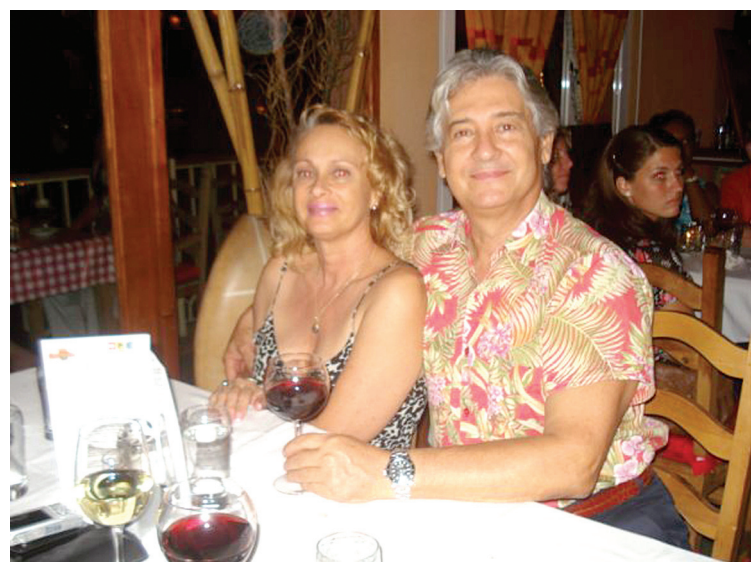


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St. Maarten/St. Martin's 50 years fêted with full agenda

PHILIPSBURG--The fiftieth anniversary of string band Tanny and the Boys, coinciding with the fiftieth observance of St. Maarten/St. Martin Day, was highlighted during the evening celebrations on Wednesday.

With the band included in most of the events leading up to and on St. Maarten/St. Martin Day celebrated on the Dutch side this year, festivity organisers justly honoured the group.

A special video presentation reflecting on the band's 50 years of playing string band music was presented during the ceremony in the Festival Village, along with dances by Motiance Dance Company splashed with confetti.

Included in yesterday's afternoon activities was a cultural parade.

Lining up at Le Grand Marché on Bush Road, the Dominicano, Colombian and Curaçao communities and Soualiga Foundation with its large group of elementary school pupils paraded in St. Maarten/St. Martin's cultural wear and depicted local heritage in the form of costumes, marching to the Festival Village.

The Soualiga Jump-up Brass Band and the visiting STYLE drum band of Saba were among drum bands leading the groups en route to the village.

Despite a smaller turnout of national groups to this year's cultural parade compared to the one of 2007, patrons were still seen enjoying the opportunity to display their national wear, traditions and music.

The Colombian community group went all out displaying a traditional bus used in their country, along with a demonstration of a conventional home and a donkey made of cardboard draped with the St. Maarten flag.

All groups waved the St. Maarten flag at the many onlookers as they marched colourfully to the Festival Village.

St. Maarten's 50th observance

of St. Maarten/St. Martin Day started off Wednesday morning with praise and worship in New Testament Baptist Church, followed by the presentation "Our Culture embraces us all" in front of the Government Administration Building.

This presentation featured the artistic talents of our local youngsters, mentally challenged and elderly citizens.

A combined choir of elementary school pupils opened with the St. Maarten and Flag Day songs.

Genevieve de Weever Primary School pupil Iris Santana Guerrero and St. Maarten Academy high school students Sarafina Samuel and Mariah

Constant reflected on what St. Maarten meant to them through poetry.

Senior citizen Neville Lake gave a resounding message urging no further destruction of Great Salt Pond, as it serves significant historical value in preserving the St. Maarten heritage. He demonstrated how salt from the pond had savoured a miniature sailboat crafted from driftwood.

Tanny and the Boys provided music and Marie Genevieve de Weever Primary School pupils danced to "The Valz." Sister Basilia Centre clients danced to "Fever."

Members of Home Away From Home Foundation sang "St. Maarten is My Home" and Shaba Jimbay traditional

drum group closed off with an impressive "Melody of Positive."

Leader of Government Commissioner William Marlin closed off the morning's proceedings with a short address to the attendees, including invited dignitaries of both sides of the island and abroad, parents, teachers and well-wishers.

As it began to rain he said the island was being blessed and reflected on how the island had progressed in the last years to be a multicultural island, as evidenced by the diversity of the schoolchildren seen that morning. He acknowledged the forefathers who were an influence in the island's diversity, having come from

all over the world.

Thereafter, the various officials laid wreaths at the Bellevue border monument before the uniformed parade took place in Philipsburg, followed by official speeches by dignitaries. (See related story)

The atmosphere in the Festival Village could be described as very festive, a reproduction of parade days during Carnival. Booths were open all day selling food and drinks, there was much socializing, and there were cultural presentations onstage. An eye-catching fireworks display closed off the day's events, which had started as early as 6:00am, and a steel pan fête continued into the night. □



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Marlin rallies in defence of St. Maarten/St. Martin Day

~ Refocus and seize opportunities, says Gumbs ~

PHILIPSBURG--“Letnoone take St. Maarten Day away from us,” was yesterday’s rallying charge by Leader of Government Commissioner William Marlin in his St. Maarten Day address to a large gathering at St. Maarten Festival Village.

In his address, President of the Territorial Council of St. Martin Frantz Gumbs told the gathering the people of St. Maarten/St. Martin needed to refocus and seize opportunities in their own country.

In a festive, family-oriented atmosphere of open booths with a variety of foods, a parade of uniformed groups and cultural performances to mark the 50th celebration of St. Maarten/St. Martin Day, hundreds were reminded of their common bond as a people and the vital need to reinforce cooperation to ensure a prosperous future for both sides of the island.

Among the speakers were Lt. Governor Franklyn Richards, Senator Louis-Constant Fleming of French St. Martin and Dutch-side Commissioner of Culture Hyacinth Richardson.

Marlin told the gathering: “Today is our national day, a day we as St. Maarten people must respect, but we have noticed that over the last few days efforts have been made to take away St. Maarten Day from us once

again. ...

“There are those among us who tried to take away the respect that St. Maarten Day deserves and we are saying if we do not respect our national day, who will respect it for us. So let us celebrate this and every St. Maarten Day after this. Let us celebrate it the way we have always done. ... Let no one take St. Maarten Day away from us.”

Although Marlin did not mention any names, many assumed that he was referring to Monday’s call by the Democratic Party for a relaxation of the mandatory shop closure decree to allow shops to open yesterday, considering the economic downturn and the fact that four cruise ships were expected in port.

Hereflectedonthesignificant population growth from the days when leaders of the island decided on November 11 as St. Maarten/St. Martin national day. In 1959, he said, the Dutch side of St. Maarten had 1,537 residents. Fifty years later, the Dutch side has approximately 55,000 registered persons and some 20,000 unregistered.

He noted that St. Maarten had undergone significant changes over the last 50 years and would continue to do so. “As early as October 2010, St. Maarten will undergo major changes as

we will no longer belong to the constellation of the Netherlands Antilles, but we will become an autonomous country within the kingdom of the Netherlands.”

Gumbs said the welcoming spirit of “sweet St. Maarten” was sometimes abused, “maybe because of our own negligence.” He urged the gathering to continue celebrating the friendship between two sides as one people, but stressed that “the people, in my opinion, is in need of re-construction.”

He said St. Maarteners/St. Martiners only now realised the potential and opportunities that others had seen here and “we too and we first can and must benefit from them as long as we ourselves choose and are prepared to use the opportunities offered.”

“Because of the symbolic nature of the number 50, maybe we should pause for a minute and look back and ask ourselves some difficult questions,” Gumbs said. “What progress have we made jointly as a country and as a people during the last 50 years? What do we want to do and what can we do that will benefit both our countries and people during the next 50 years?”

He said political institutions most naturally would change and adapt to new realities and new ambitions,

“but whose ambitions?” he asked. He said economies had boomed and must continue growing, “but at what cost to our people and to our environment?” He lamented the situation of the island’s youth, who he said would face no tomorrow if social ills weren’t addressed. He said the situation was “frightening.”

“Although what I have said might seem somewhat gloomy, I want to emphasise that I believe strongly that there are reasons for hope and for great expectations. We have gone through difficult times in the past and have always come out of our experiences with advancements that have proven positive for our populations,” he said.

“I remain confident that despite all of the current negatives, better days are ahead of us if we are prepared to work hard and diligently towards the same goal: To make St. Maarten a better place to live for St. Maarteners and for friends of St. Maarten,” he concluded. Lt. Governor Franklyn Richards lauded residents for recognising their common destiny and for rising above many obstacles over 50 years. While acknowledging that the foundation of “our island nation” had “social cracks,” Richards said North and South must work together to

address these issues which, in time, affected the people of both sides of the island.

Commissioner of Culture Hyacinth Richardson recalled the man-made and natural obstacles that had tested the faith of residents over the years, from hurricanes to political storms. He congratulated the people for turning “those bitter experiences into sweet ones” and pointed out that their dependence on each other had resulted in compassion that was displayed on a daily basis.

Senator Louis-Constant Fleming of French St. Martin detailed the political history of both sides of the island and the decisions that had been made without consultation with local governments prior to 1959. The 50-year period since then, he said, has been dominated by the politicians trying to secure a constitutional status that would benefit the people of the island.

He said both sides, with new constitutional agreements in place, could look forward to change that would be “good for all of us.” He pledged to “do the impossible” to ensure that regular meetings of French- and Dutch-side officials would be held so the two sides of the island could move forward as one whenever and wherever possible. □

First cruise ship berths at new mega ship pier

POINTE BLANCHE--The four cruise ships in port blasted their horns in celebration of the first ship, Carnival Glory, christening the new 445-metre-long 21-metre-wide mega cruise ship pier on Wednesday, St. Maarten Day. This new pier, juxtaposed to Dr. A.C. Wathey Pier, brings the number of cruise ship berths to six.

The new yet-to-be named pier was designed to accommodate vessels of 220,000 tonnes and larger.

Carnival Corporation was a major partner in the Dr. A.C. Wathey Cruise and Cargo Facilities expansion project that included the building of the new pier.

The berthing of Carnival Glory on St. Maarten Day was symbolic of the relationship that exists between the company and the island.

Harbour Commissioner Theo Heyliger, standing on the new pier, thanked Carnival for being a continued partner in the development of the cruise tourism industry which accounts for most of the island's revenues.

"It is not often you get to tear

down one icon and build two new ones," the commissioner said of his role in having to condemn and demolish the old wooden Dr. A.C. Wathey Pier after it was damaged by Hurricane Luis in 1995. That pier serviced the island for more than 30 years.

This demolition was followed by building of the new cruise pier as part of the Dr. A.C. Wathey Cruise and Cargo Facilities in 2001. Within 10 years, the second pier – designed for the future larger cruise ships – was built by the same contractor, Ballast Nadem, but this time in partnership with Per Aarsleff.

The commissioner added that the success of the pier and general expansion project cannot be separated from the unanimous approval it received in Island Council from all members.

Heyliger likened the support he had received from Leader of Government Commissioner William Marlin and former leader of government and commissioner Sarah Wescot-Williams to that given by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to Christopher

Columbus when he went exploring, because without their help the project would have been at a standstill.

To mark the first berthing, Heyliger presented a plaque made from a plank of wood from the old Dr. A.C. Wathey Pier to Carnival Corporation Vice President Giora Israel. The exchanged was witnessed by, amongst others, the captains of Carnival Glory, Emerald Princess, Oceana and Sea Princess, Commissioner Frans Richardson, Island Council members Roy Marlin, Maria Buncamper-Molanus, Petrus Leroy de Weever, and George Pantophlet, and harbour partners.

Three photos showing Carnival Glory on approach and berthed at the new pier were given by St. Maarten Harbour Group of Companies to Captain Giovanni Cutugno.

Carnival Vice President Israel said that the end of one era ushers in another so the destruction of the old wooden pier paved the way for "a young ambitious politician" Theo Heyliger to envision the development of a then-new Dr. A.C. Wathey pier and adjoining facilities

and now the expansion. This vision, he added, has made and kept St. Maarten as the number one cruise destination in the Caribbean.

Negotiating with Heyliger in the lead-up to the expansion project was tough but he delivered the project as promised and has continued to create a "complete destination," Israel said.

St. Maarten is the only island in the Caribbean with which Carnival has entered into a partnership, whereby it has loaned US \$34 million for an expansion project and has guaranteed a certain number of ships and passengers over 20 years to offset the loan repayment.

Another first for St. Maarten, according to Israel, is that it is the only place Carnival has loaned money to that did not come back asking for more because the project was over budget or not calculated correctly. "Commissioner Heyliger, the harbour board and management signed a contract and stood behind it."

Israel, like Heyliger, commended the harbour board and management as well as the government, past and present,

for their support of the project and the cruise industry.

Harbour Group CEO Mark Mingo said it was a momentous occasion to have Carnival Glory as the first to berth at the new pier on the 50th anniversary of St. Maarten Day. He commended all parties involved in the project. He pointed out that despite the setback presented by Hurricane Omar in October 2008, the project was still completed in time for the 2009-2010 cruise season.

Ballast Nedam Area Manager Caribbean and South America Johan Verhagen said the company was happy to take up the challenge of building the second pier. The work was "reasonably ahead of schedule" when Omar hit the island and set back work about four months but the pier will still be delivered to the harbour on May 1.

Verhagen pointed out that more than 50 per cent of the construction had been carried out by local subcontractors. He gave the principal stakeholders in the project paintings depicting a Dutch countryside landscape with a windmill. □

ExCo to send letter to SunResorts requesting buildings demolition

PHILIPSBURG--Commissioner William Marlin has informed owner of SunResorts N.V. Hushang Ansary that the Executive Council will be sending a formal letter to SunResorts N.V. requesting that the remaining structures on the Mullet Bay property be demolished. Marlin's statement comes after Ansary said last weekend that SunResorts would demolish the buildings "if it is a requirement and if we are asked." Marlin met with Ansary during his recent visit to the island and relayed that the island government believed that it was not necessary to defer this action (demolition) until a decision was taken about the future development of the property. Although he did not indicate when such a letter would be forwarded to Ansary, he said he hoped this step would be taken before the end of the year. It was not clear which "step" the Commissioner was referring to: the sending of the letter or the demolition. He could not be reached for further clarification last night. Marlin in his release also said he had discussed the University of St. Martin with Ansary. "We discussed the current state of the financial situation of the University and the critical importance of its future role in the development of St. Maarten. For the University of St. Martin to survive, the assistance of the Ambassador was needed now more than ever," the Commissioner of Education said. Among other issues discussed were the need for housing on the island and the possibility of participation by the business community in such a project. Marlin said he had discussed several planned housing projects with Ansary, particularly the need for affordable financing. "Together we looked at ways and means that private initiative could be helpful, and the Ambassador showed keen interest and a desire to be helpful. He expressed the hope that other leaders of the business community would do the same," Marlin said. □



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Intel settles AMD claims but isn't off the hook



By **JORDAN ROBERTSON**,
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO - Intel Corp. is paying Silicon Valley rival Advanced Micro Devices Inc. \$1.25 billion to squash a legal battle over Intel's sales tactics, a rift that led to antitrust charges against Intel in several countries and was headed toward a costly and nasty trial next year.

The settlement announced Thursday between Intel and AMD — whose microprocessors serve as the brains for nearly all personal computers — doesn't let Intel off the hook. It still has to deal with the antitrust charges that AMD pressed governments to file.

The biggest case is in Europe, where regulators have fined Intel a record \$1.45 billion over what they described as Intel's illegal tactics to bully

PC makers into choosing Intel chips over AMD's. EU spokesman Jonathan Todd said that the European Commission "takes note" of Intel's settlement with AMD but that it does not change Intel's duty to comply with European antitrust law.

Intel is also fighting an \$18.6 million fine in Korea and a federal lawsuit filed last week by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who accused Intel of abusing its dominance to "rule with an iron fist." The U.S. Federal Trade Commission also is investigating.

The settlement does allow Intel to duck a trial set for March in Delaware over a federal lawsuit AMD filed in 2005.

"While it pains me to write a check at any time, in this case I think it was a practical settlement," Intel CEO Paul Otellini said on a call with analysts. "And it was a good compromise between the two companies. And in many ways it was a small multiple of the potential damages that could be awarded in a jury trial."

AMD shares soared \$1.15, or 22 percent, to \$6.47 in

afternoon trading. Intel shares fell 1 cent to \$19.83.

The lawsuit reflected AMD's long-standing accusation that Intel has kept AMD's market share from rising no higher than about 20 percent by threatening PC makers and offering financial incentives for avoiding AMD chips. AMD's lawsuit quotes one manager from Toshiba comparing Intel's incentives to "cocaine." It also cites executives from Gateway complaining that Intel's threats of retaliation for working with AMD beat the executives "into guacamole." Intel has defended its practices, saying it simply offered rebates to big customers, which allowed them to pass lower PC prices on to consumers.

It's not clear how much of Intel's behavior will change under Thursday's deal. Intel agreed to "abide by a set of business practice provisions," and AMD said the changes resolve its concerns "to a great extent." But Intel says that as part of the deal it will refrain from giving financial incentives to companies that limit their use of AMD chips — which the company had always said it wasn't doing

anyway.

The settlement has precedent. In 1995 the companies, which are headquartered mere miles from each other, made peace over different issues. That deal gave AMD the right to keep producing chips based on a design known as the "x86 architecture," which both companies still use today. A trial over the latest issues could have been dangerous for both companies.

Intel risked heavy penalties if it lost. A verdict for AMD also could have increased the momentum for cases like those that have come in Europe, New York and Korea.

Meanwhile, AMD, which is struggling to whittle \$3.7 billion in debt and pull off a major restructuring, could have found the trial prohibitively expensive. The companies have not said how much they have spent on legal fees related to the case, but it's easily in the tens of millions of dollars.

Intel also had a cudgel against AMD. AMD's restructuring has included the spinoff of its manufacturing arm to cut costs, a move that Intel says violated the x86 licensing agreement.

AMD argued the spinoff didn't need a new license to make chips that incorporated Intel's technology, but Intel argued it did.

That spinoff is critical to AMD's turnaround after it lost billions while trying to compete dollar-for-dollar against Intel in developing advanced manufacturing techniques, a fight AMD ultimately conceded it couldn't win.

Under the terms of the new agreement, AMD and Intel entered into a new, five-year cross-licensing deal. Intel dropped claims that AMD breached the earlier agreement. And AMD is dropping all litigation against Intel and withdrawing its regulatory complaints worldwide.

"It is a pivot from war to peace," said Tom McCoy, AMD's top lawyer.

Intel said that with the \$1.25 billion settlement, its spending in the current quarter will now be \$4.2 billion rather than the \$2.9 billion it had previously forecast. It also expects its tax rate to be 20 percent rather than 26 percent. All other expectations are unchanged, Intel said. □

Apple plans 40-50 store openings in 2010

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Apple Inc said on Thursday it plans to open 40 to 50 retail stores next year as the consumer electronics giant expands its reach to customers.

More than half of the new stores will be outside the United States, with new outlets planned in London, Paris and two in Shanghai.

Speaking ahead of a store opening in New York, Ron Johnson, Apple's senior vice president of retail, said the company expects the holiday selling season to be a good one.

Apple now operates 280 stores in 10 countries.

The stores, first launched in 2001, have proved to be hugely popular with consumers. Apple hosted 45.9 million store visitors during the September quarter, up 7 percent from a year earlier.

The stores posted revenue of \$1.87 billion in the quarter, their highest level ever and up 9 percent from a year earlier.

Shares of Cupertino, California-based Apple rose 52 cents to \$203.77 in late-morning trade on the Nasdaq. □



Corel gets sweetened buyout offer of \$4 per share

OTTAWA — Corel Corp., the maker of WordPerfect and other software, said Thursday its largest shareholder has increased the price at which it wants to buy the company.

Corel said investment company Vector Capital, which owns 68 percent of Corel through Corel Holdings LP, initially offered to buy the company for \$3.50 per share, or \$30 million. But on Wednesday night, it bumped up its offer by 50 cents, to \$4 per share, according to a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Corel's board said it is evaluating the revised offer. In March 2008, Vector Capital offered to buy the

company for \$11 per share. But it withdrew the offer five months later after the company said it would pursue alternative relationships.

In August 2008, Corel got a buyout offer from two parties for \$12.50 per share, pending their due diligence. The offer was later cut to \$10.50 per share and withdrawn in October 2008 as banks tightened credit due to the financial crisis.

Vector Capital got back into the picture in August 2009 and two months later made an offer to buy the rest of Corel it doesn't already own for \$3.50 per share.

Corel also develops and sells WinZip, Paint Shop

image editing software and other products.

Shares of Corel, based in Ottawa, Ontario, were up 36 cents, or 9.9 percent, to \$4.01 in afternoon Nasdaq trading. □



BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

Drop in energy use upends early advance in stocks



Trader Ronald Madarasz works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009.

By TIM PARADIS
and IEVA M. AUGSTUMS,
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — A drop in energy stocks dragged the market lower Thursday following a government report that consumers and businesses cut back on their use of oil and gas.

A jump in petroleum supplies last week stirred worries that the falling demand for energy was a sign of more weakness in the economy. The report pushed the price of crude oil below \$77 a barrel.

The resulting slide in energy shares erased early gains from technology stocks, which rose after 3Com Corp. agreed to a \$2.7 billion takeover by Hewlett-Packard Co. and as Intel Corp. said it would pay \$1.25 billion to Advanced Micro Devices Inc. to settle legal disputes.

The poor report on energy usage overshadowed other

news about the economy. The Labor Department said new claims for unemployment insurance fell to a seasonally adjusted 502,000 from an upwardly revised 514,000 the previous week. That's the fewest claims since the week ending Jan. 3, and below economists' estimates.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. reported third-quarter earnings that beat analysts' expectations, though sales at stores open at least a year dropped during the quarter. The nation's biggest retailer said sales at existing stores would range from a drop of 1 percent to a gain of 1 percent in its fourth quarter, a disappointment for investors. Sales at stores open at least a year are an important indicator of a retailer's strength.

Because of its size, Wal-Mart is seen as a key indicator of consumer spending trends. Investors are still not convinced that spending by

consumers will pick up enough to spur a strong recovery in the economy. Meanwhile, Kohl's Corp. said higher sales helped lift its third-quarter profit 21 percent.

Frank Ingarra Jr., co-portfolio manager at Hennessy Funds in Stamford, Conn., said stocks had been due for a pause after steep gains in the past week. The Dow Jones industrial average and the Standard & Poor's 500 index rose to 13-month highs Wednesday.

"There is very light volume so it looks like the market wants to do a little consolidating here," he said.

In early afternoon trading, the Dow fell 59.63, or 0.6 percent, to 10,231.63. The Dow rose 519 points, or 5.3 percent, in the past six days, the longest stretch of gains since an eight-day advance in late August.

The broader S&P 500 index fell 7.34, or 0.7 percent, to 1,091.17, and the Nasdaq slipped 9.44, or 0.4 percent, to 2,157.46.

Three stocks fell for every one that rose on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume came to 510.7 million shares compared with 561.8 million shares traded at same point Wednesday.

Long-term Treasuries fell after light demand at government auction of 30-year notes. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite its price, rose to 3.49 percent from 3.48 percent late Tuesday. Bond markets were closed Wednesday for Veterans Day. Crude oil fell \$2.25 to \$77.03 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Gold fell.

The drop in oil weighed on energy stocks. Chevron Corp. fell \$1.22, or 1.6 percent, to \$77.29, while Range Resources Corp. fell \$2.25, or 4.4 percent, to \$48.95.

Among tech stocks, 3Com rose \$1.79, or 31.5 percent, to

\$7.48, while H-P fell 42 cents, or 0.8 percent, to \$49.58.

Advanced Micro rose \$1.16, or 21.8 percent, to \$6.48, while Intel slipped 2 cents, or 0.1 percent, to \$19.82.

Wal-Mart rose 48 cents, or 0.9 percent, to \$53.45, and Kohl's advanced 32 cents, or 0.6 percent, to \$54.90.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies fell 6.76, or 1.1 percent, to 585.95.

Overseas, Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock average fell 0.7 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.2 percent, Germany's DAX index fell 0.1 percent and France's CAC-40 fell 0.2 percent. □



In this photo made Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009, Linda Cook, of Cranston, R.I. examines job listings at a state managed employment center, in Providence, R.I. Cook, who is unemployed, worked in mortgage sales before being laid off. New claims for unemployment insurance fell more than expected last week, evidence the job market is slowly healing as the economy recovers.

(AP Photo/Steven Senne)

Jobless claims fall, but hiring gains seem far off

By CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER,
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Fewer people are claiming unemployment benefits — but still too many to signal that the economy is close to gaining jobs.

First-time claims for jobless benefits dropped last week to a seasonally adjusted 502,000, the Labor Department said Thursday. That's the fewest claims since the week ending Jan. 3, and below economists' estimates.

Claims would have to fall to the high 400s to indicate the economy could soon produce even a slight gain in jobs, estimates Abiel Reinhart, an economist at JPMorgan Chase. That level of claims could be reached by January, he said, and the economy should start gaining jobs sometime in the first quarter of 2010. Still, Reinhart doesn't expect the gains to be strong enough to push down the unemployment rate — now at a 26-year high of 10.2 percent — until the second quarter.

Zach Pandl, an economist at Nomura Securities, said he thinks jobless claims would need to drop to about 425,000 before jobs would be added. Pandl expects the economy to produce a net gain in jobs by January.

President Barack Obama said Thursday he'll host a White House summit next month on combating the joblessness that continues to drag on a struggling economy. □

John King to be replacing Dobbs' show on CNN

By DAVID BAUDER,
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — John King is replacing Lou Dobbs on CNN.

Jon Klein, CNN president, said Thursday that veteran reporter King will move into the 7 p.m. EST slot that's been vacated by Lou Dobbs. King will host a show about politics beginning early next year.

That puts him in direct competition with MSNBC's Chris Matthews, whose "Hardball" is also about politics. Fox News Channel's Shepard Smith, who does a more general interest newscast, dominates the cable news ratings in that hour.

Dobbs announced abruptly Wednesday evening that it would be his last show on CNN. He said he wanted to pursue more advocacy journalism, a route that was no longer available to him on CNN.

King has been a top political reporter at CNN since 1997, when he joined from The Associated Press. He hosts the Sunday program, "State of the Union," which he will be

giving up early next year.

He said Thursday that he wants his show to bring more depth to issues, to get beyond a phrase like "public option" to explain what it really means. There will be provocative discussions, and guests with many different opinions will be welcomed.

"I'm going to do what I think needs to be done," he said. "I think over time that viewers, if they compare and contrast, will be getting more meat" from his show than his competitors.

The Washington-based show doesn't have a name yet. He wouldn't comment on Dobbs' exit: "I don't see any value today in looking into the rearview mirror," he said.

Dobbs had become a target of criticism from liberal and Latino advocacy organizations for his campaign against illegal immigration, and sparred with CNN management over the summer when he talked about questions over President Barack Obama's birth site after CNN reporters had found nothing to substantiate the issue. CNN management

pressed Dobbs to keep his opinions to himself — at the same time Dobbs was doing an unrelated daily radio show as a commentator on various issues.

He said he was leaving CNN to pursue new opportunities. While those are unclear, he vowed to be a leader in the "national conversation" to restore "inspiration to our great free society and our market economy."

He was a CNN original, signing on when the cable network started in 1980. For much of that time, he hosted a nightly business broadcast that became one of the most influential shows in the corporate world, and CNN's most profitable show for advertising revenue.

But Dobbs said his world view changed after the 2001 terrorist attacks and corporate corruption scandals, and he began to more freely express his opinions. He was particularly persistent in bringing the immigration issue to the fore, winning him both higher ratings and enemies. Latino groups had an



FILE - Tuesday, July 28, 2009 file photo, CNN anchor John King poses for a portrait during the summer Television Critics Association press tour in Pasadena, Calif. King is replacing Lou Dobbs on CNN. John Klein, CNN president, said Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009, that veteran reporter King will move into the 7 p.m. EST (0000 GMT) slot that's been vacated by Lou Dobbs. King will host a show about politics beginning early next year.

(AP Photo/Dan Steinberg, File)

Jackson's 'This Is It' tops \$200 million worldwide



A Michael Jackson fan waits next to electronic posters at the Australian premiere of the documentary "This Is It", in Sydney October 28, 2009.

REUTERS/Daniel Munoz

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Michael Jackson's concert movie "This Is It" has taken more than \$200 million at box offices worldwide in the first two weeks of release, the studio behind the movie said on Thursday.

Sony Pictures Entertainment

said the movie had grossed \$61 million in North America and more than \$140 million internationally. Japan (\$27.2 million) and the UK (\$14.3 million) were particularly strong markets.

The movie is now the 22nd biggest grossing

movie worldwide of 2009, according to industry tracker boxofficemojo.com

"This Is It", distributed by Sony Corp-owned Columbia Pictures, was compiled from footage of Jackson rehearsing for a series of planned comeback concerts before his sudden death in June.

Sony paid concert promoters AEG and Jackson's estate about \$60 million for the right to make and distribute the movie. The \$200 million plus gross is almost three times more than 2008's "Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert Tour" -- a movie some box office watchers had used as a benchmark for "This Is It."

The Jackson film opened on October 28 for a planned two week run but has since been extended until early December. □

active petition drive seeking his removal.

His presence became awkward for CNN, particularly as it began emphasizing that it was taking a non-biased approach to contrast with MSNBC and Fox. His resignation was hailed by activists who were seeking his ouster.

"Our contention all along was that Lou Dobbs — who has a long history of spreading lies and conspiracy theories about immigrants and Latinos — does not belong on the most trusted name in news," said Roberto Lovato, co-founder of Presente.org. "We are thrilled that Dobbs no longer

has the legitimate platform from which to incite fear and hate."

Tom Saenz, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the leading Latino legal organization, said, "The Latino community can and should celebrate that Lou Dobbs is no longer on CNN."

U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez, a Democrat from Dobbs' home state of New Jersey and the Senate's only Hispanic member, called it "addition by subtraction" for CNN.

Dobbs did not return telephone and e-mail messages to talk about his critics. □



Obama's hesitancy on war buildup sends messages

**BEN FELLER
ROBERT BURNS**

**Associated Press Writers
WASHINGTON (AP)** —

President Barack Obama's drawn-out decision-making on Afghanistan is sending messages. To the Afghan government: Clean up your act. To the Pentagon: I'm no rubber stamp. To the American public: More troops cannot be the sole answer.

Obama has been accused by some Republicans of "dithering" about whether to send more troops and deepen U.S. involvement in an increasingly unpopular war.

The slow process also has left him open to critics who recall his pronouncement in March, after developing what he called a "stronger, smarter and comprehensive" Afghan war strategy, that the situation there was "increasingly perilous." He ordered more troops to battle then, with little discernible result so far.

This time, he is making it clear he will not rushed. Or pushed. And the way the messages he is sending play out could help determine whether the war effort is sustainable in the long run.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters Thursday that the president was nearing a final decision, and he referred to one of the central questions Obama and his advisers have wrestled with for weeks.

"How do we signal resolve and at the same time signal to the Afghans and the American people that this isn't an open-ended commitment?"

At a White House war council meeting Wednesday, Obama rejected the four Afghan war options put before him and asked for revisions that combine the best elements of the proposals, Gates said. The changes could alter the



President Barack Obama is greeted by Air Force Col. Steven Shepro, commander of the 316th Wing, as he walks from Marine One to Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009.

Associated Press

dynamic of both how many additional troops are sent to Afghanistan and their time in the war zone.

Obama is not expected to decide the Afghan matter until after he returns from Asia late next week. Meanwhile, Richard C. Holbrooke, Obama's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, left late Wednesday for consultations with officials in Germany, France and Russia. State Department spokesman Ian C. Kelly said Holbrooke would then attend President Hamid Karzai's inauguration in Kabul.

Obama is considering options that include adding 30,000 or more U.S. forces to take on the Taliban and associated insurgent groups in key areas of Afghanistan — and to buy time for the Afghan government's inadequate and ill-equipped fighting forces to prepare to take over defense of their country. The

other three options are ranges of troop increases, from a relatively small addition to the roughly 40,000 preferred by the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, according to military and other officials.

In contrast to the McChrystal approach, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry in Kabul has argued against sending large numbers of additional troops. Eikenberry, himself a former U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, harbors strong doubts about the viability of the government there.

James Dobbins, who served as special envoy to Afghanistan during the Bush administration, said in a telephone interview Thursday that the Obama review "has gone on long enough and it is starting to create fissures" among his advisers, as evidenced by the apparent split between Eikenberry and McChrystal.

Continued on Next Page

US: Fort Hood suspect charged with murder

**ANGELA K. BROWN
LOLITA C. BALDOR**

Associated Press Writers

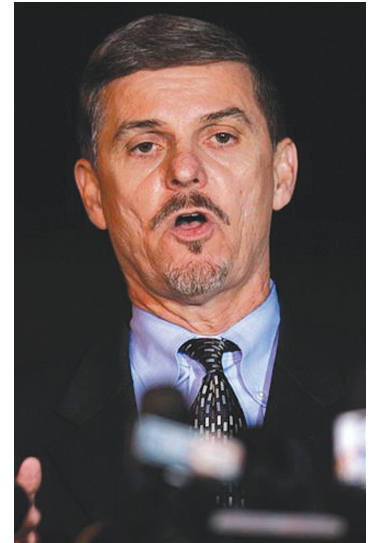
FORT HOOD, TEXAS (AP) —

The Army psychiatrist accused in the Fort Hood shootings was charged with 13 counts of premeditated murder in the military's legal system, making him eligible for the death penalty if convicted, officials said Thursday.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama ordered a review of all intelligence related to Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan and whether it was properly shared and acted upon within individual government agencies.

The announcement comes as members of Congress are pressuring for a full investigation in why Hasan was not detected and stopped. A Senate hearing on Hasan is scheduled for next week.

Continued on Page B3



Chris Grey, spokesman for the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, talks about the investigation at a news conference at Fort Hood headquarters in Killeen, Texas, Saturday, Nov. 7, 2009. Army psychiatrist Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan is suspected of opening fire on fellow soldiers during a rampage on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009.

Associated Press



Hanna Nasser, chairman of the Palestinian election commission, speaks during a press conference in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009. Palestinian election officials have recommended calling off January's presidential election, a step that could result in embattled President Mahmoud Abbas staying in office indefinitely.

Associated Press

Palestinian vote put off, Abbas remains in office

MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH

Associated Press Writer

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who last week said he didn't want to run for re-election, may get to stay in office without a single ballot being cast.

Continued on Page B7



In this Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2009 file photo, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry looks on during a memorial service in Kabul.

Associated Press

OBAMA'S MESSAGES

Continued from Page B1

Obama's own words offer insight into how he's pursuing his decision.

"I've been asking not only General McChrystal, but

all of our commanders who are familiar with the situation, as well as our civilian folks on the ground, a lot of questions," Obama said when describing his war review. "I want to make sure that we have tested all the assumptions we're making before we send young men and women into harm's way."

Obama is out to show a methodical approach to wartime decision-making that incorporates, but is not wedded to, the advice of the military.

The White House has also sought to distance itself from the style of President George W. Bush, whom Obama officials had long accused of being unwilling to listen to dissent.

Although Obama's review has been portrayed as mainly a debate about U.S. troop levels, the White House's focus appears to be shifting toward the political side of the equation: Can the Afghan government become a credible partner or is it a source of weakness to be continually exploited by the Taliban insurgents?

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, speaking to reporters in the Philippines, zeroed in on that Thursday.

"We're looking to President Karzai, as he forms a new government, to take action that will demonstrate — not to the international community, but first and foremost to his own people — that his second term will respond to the needs that are so manifest," Clinton said.

"And I think that the corruption issue really goes to the heart of whether the people of Afghanistan feel that the government is on their side, is working for them."

Central to any counterinsurgency fight is the struggle over the legitimacy of the government. One explanation for the resurgence of the Taliban over the past three years concerns the failings of the Afghan government, which the Taliban have managed to exploit by offering what many Afghans see as a viable alternative. That is why Obama has taken pains to push for greater non-military support for the mission — additional State Department personnel and more focus on developing Afghan agriculture and trade.

It is also notable that while this deliberation has evolved, a president just 10 months on the job has gotten a much more direct look at the human cost of war, which has undoubtedly affected his thinking.

At Dover Air Force Base in the state of Delaware, he greeted the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

At Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, he saw troops grievously injured in war.

At Fort Hood in Texas, he consoled the families of soldiers shot dead, allegedly by one of their own.

Before his Fort Hood trip this week, Obama said the visit "absolutely has an impact because it reminds me of the costs involved. It reminds me that these aren't abstractions."

As for the increasingly anxious American people, Obama said in late September: "I understand the public's weariness of this war, given that it comes on top of weariness about the war in Iraq."

His response: "I would expect that the public would ask some very tough questions. That's exactly what I'm doing, is asking some very tough questions." □

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FORT HOOD

Continued from Page B1

The Senate Homeland Security Committee announced it is opening its own investigation this week.

U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command spokesman Chris Grey said at a news conference that additional charges may be filed against Hasan.

Officials told The Associated Press before the news conference that it had not been decided whether to charge Hasan with a 14th count of murder related to the death of the unborn child of a pregnant shooting victim. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the case publicly.

John Galligan, Hasan's civilian attorney, said his military co-counsel told him that charges were being read to Hasan in the hospital without his lawyers present.

"I don't like it. I feel like I'm being left out of the loop," Galligan said. "I guess it's 13 charges, but I don't like to have to guess in this situation."

Grey said investigators believe Hasan was the lone gunman. Hasan was not at the Soldier Readiness Center for any pre-

deployment activities when he allegedly opened fire last week, Grey said. The readiness center, parking lots and four other post buildings were still being treated as crime scenes, and the investigation remained open.

"We have a duty and obligation to protect the constitutional rights of everyone involved," Grey said.

The White House review will be overseen by John Brennan, assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism, and the first results are due to the White House by Nov. 30.

Obama also ordered the preservation of the intelligence. Members of Congress, particularly Michigan Rep. Peter Hoekstra, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, have called for a full examination of what agencies knew about Hasan's contacts with a radical imam and others of concern to the U.S., and what they did with the information.

The FBI confirmed this week that the U.S. government knew about 10 to 20 e-mails between Hasan and a radical American imam beginning in December 2008.

Months before the shootings,

doctors and staff overseeing Hasan's training reported viewing him at times as belligerent, defensive and argumentative in his frequent discussions of his Muslim faith, according to a military official familiar with several group discussions about Hasan. The official was not authorized to speak publicly about the meetings and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The concerns about Hasan's performance and religious views were shared with other military officials considering his assignment after he finished his medical training, and the consensus was to send the 39-year-old psychiatrist to Fort Hood in Texas, the official said.

One of the largest military installations, it was considered the best assignment for Hasan because other doctors could handle the workload if he continued to perform poorly and his superiors could document any continued behavior problems, the official said.

Hasan repeatedly referred to his strong religious views in discussions with classmates, his superiors and even in his research work, the official said. His behavior, while at



In this Nov. 10, 2009 photo, John Galligan speaks to a reporter in Belton, Texas. Galligan has been hired by Maj. Nidal Hasan's family in Hasan's defense related to the Fort Hood killings. Hasan, the Army psychiatrist alleged to have killed 13 people at the massive Army installation in Texas last week is still in hospital.

Associated Press

times perceived as intense and combative, was not unlike the zeal of others with strong religious views. But some doctors and staff were concerned that their unfamiliarity with the Muslim faith would lead them to unfairly single out Hasan's behavior, the official said. Some in the group questioned Hasan's sympathies as an Army psychiatrist, whether he would be more aligned with Muslims fighting U.S. troops. There also was some concern about whether he should continue to serve in the military, the official said.

A joint terrorism task force overseen by the FBI learned late last year of Hasan's repeated contact with a radical Muslim cleric who encouraged Muslims to kill U.S. troops in Iraq. The FBI said in a statement late Wednesday that the task force did not refer early information about Hasan to superiors because it concluded he wasn't linked to terrorism.

The doctors and staff who discussed concerns about Hasan saw no signs of mental problems, no risk factors that would predict violent behavior. □



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Women face tough choices on abortion coverage



This undated photo provided by NARAL Pro-Choice America shows policy director Donna Crane.

Associated Press

DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—Millions of American women will face tough choices about abortion coverage if restrictions in the House health care bill become law, both sides in the abortion debate agree.

Divisions over abortion are a major obstacle in President Barack Obama's push for health care overhaul, with both sides arguing over how to apply current law that bars taxpayer dollars for abortions in a totally new landscape. Under pressure from the

Catholic Church and abortion foes, the House added tough restrictions to its version of a health care bill. The measure would prohibit the proposed new government-run insurance plan from covering abortions except in cases of rape, incest or to save a mother's life, and bars any health plan receiving federal subsidies in a new insurance marketplace from offering abortion coverage. If women wanted to purchase abortion coverage through such plans, they'd have to buy it separately, as a so-called rider on their policy.

"It forces insurance companies and women to navigate a series of chutes and ladders to get abortion coverage at the end of the day," said Donna Crane, policy director for NARAL Pro-Choice America.

The amendment's proponents says its goal is simply to ensure that a long-standing ban on using federal dollars for elective abortions is extended to coverage plans arising from new health care legislation.

Rep. Bart Stupak, a Michigan Democrat and an abortion foe, insisted the amendment is not a dramatic change in current law, offered to negotiate if his critics could convince him otherwise, and said it leaves

ample alternatives for women to obtain coverage if they use their own money and are willing to buy a separate, add-on plan.

"If you really still want this coverage, you can have it," he said. "The only difference is that more people will have to make that decision that they didn't confront before. ... More people are going to have to choose, 'Is this a benefit I want?'"

Crane and other abortion-rights advocates say the amendment would make it harder — in some cases perhaps impossible — for millions of women to have health insurance that covers abortion. They depict it as one of the gravest assaults ever on American women's reproductive rights.

Two large groups of women would not be affected by the amendment: low-income women already ineligible for abortion coverage because they rely on federal Medicaid funds for health care, and women who have abortion coverage through the private plans of their own or their husbands' large employers. Most Americans currently have employer-sponsored coverage.

That leaves a significant number of other women likely

to be affected — women who would be prime candidates for joining the new federally subsidized plans, but in the process might have to forgo abortion coverage they had previously under a private plan. These would include self-employed women who must buy their own coverage, divorced women who formerly were insured through their husbands' employers, and women who work in small businesses whose owners decide to seek more affordable coverage through the new exchange. "This is a middle-class abortion ban that would impact millions of middle-class women," added Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "It's saying to them, 'You can't get full coverage that meets your needs.'"

Abortion-rights activists say the option of buying additional coverage for abortion — a so-called rider — is a false promise. They cite the examples of Oklahoma and North Dakota, where riders have had negligible use even though allowed under state laws that otherwise ban insurance coverage of elective abortions.

"Abortion coverage should be

part of the regular package," Crane said. "Women don't expect unplanned pregnancies and don't expect their wanted pregnancies to go wrong. ... They don't anticipate needing abortion coverage so they wouldn't buy a rider."

Kristin Binns of WellPoint, Inc., which oversees health plans serving 35 million Americans, said it's impossible for the insurance industry at this stage to estimate how much such riders would cost and the extent to which they might be offered.

"We don't have a clue," she said. Douglas Johnson, the National Right to Life Committee's legislative director, said it's difficult to forecast the restrictions' practical impact, but he agreed that some women now covered for abortions would face restrictions if they wanted to switch to potentially cheaper coverage in the new insurance marketplace, known as an exchange.

"There's a choice they are offered by the government — this gift, this great subsidy — and this plan is not going to cover everything, as a matter of public policy," he said. "If there's a market (for add-on abortion riders), if there are people who think it's that important, it will be offered."

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 21 million people would purchase individual coverage through the exchange, under the House plan. That would amount to about 7 percent of Americans under the age of 65. Of those, about 18 million would have government subsidies and thus would have to be in plans that don't cover abortions.

"Beyond that, it's an open question for individual insurance companies — how much of their business is in the exchange or outside it," said Adam Sonfield of the Guttmacher Institute, which studies reproductive-rights issues. Stupak says one reason his amendment's impact would be limited is because only a small fraction of abortions — 13 percent by Guttmacher Institute estimates — are paid for directly by private insurance. □

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Lawyer: Balloon boy parents to plead guilty

P. SOLOMON BANDA
Associated Press Writer

FORT COLLINS, Colorado (AP) — The parents accused of pulling a spectacular hoax by reporting that their 6-year-old son had floated away aboard a helium balloon have agreed to plead guilty in a deal that could send them both to jail but protect the wife from deportation.

Richard Heene will plead guilty to attempting to influence a public servant, a felony, said his attorney, David Lane. Heene's wife, Mayumi, a Japanese citizen who could be deported if convicted of more serious charges, will plead guilty to a lesser charge of false reporting to authorities, a misdemeanor.

Lane said the threat of deportation "fueled" negotiations with prosecutors. An attorney for Mayumi Heene said her immigration status was a factor in reaching the deal but would not comment further.

Prosecutors announced criminal charges against the couple Thursday. A spokeswoman for the Larimer County district attorney's office would not discuss whether a plea agreement had been reached.

The Oct. 15 saga gripped a global audience, first with fear for the safety of 6-year-old Falcon Heene and then

with anger at his parents when authorities accused them of perpetrating the hoax to drum up attention for a possible reality show.

Lane said the deal does not call for removing Falcon or the couple's other two children — ages 8 and 10 — from the parents' custody.

The plea deal would spare the Heenes the maximum jail time, but Richard Heene could still get up to 90 days and Mayumi up to 60, Lane said.

Without the deal, the charge against Richard Heene carries a possible sentence of two to six years in state prison and a fine of up to \$500,000. The charge against his wife is punishable by up to six months in the county jail and a fine up to \$750.

Mayumi Heene's attorney, Lee Christian, said he expects her to serve any jail time in a work-release program that would involve some detention and some time at home.

The parents still face an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration, which could lead to federal charges. The balloon briefly forced some planes to switch to a different runway for takeoff from the Denver airport.

Prosecutors said the Heenes agreed to turn themselves in and went to court Thursday

to sign documents promising to appear before a judge on Friday. They held hands as they walked into the courthouse. The couple's children were not with them.

Richard Heene also had a booking photo taken at a county jail and was released. He declined to comment.

Lane said prosecutors insisted on a "package deal" that required Richard Heene to plead guilty to a felony so Mayumi Heene could plead guilty to a misdemeanor and avoid deportation.

"He feels like he's got to do what he's got to do to save his wife from being deported," Lane said.

The Heenes are amateur storm chasers and had twice appeared on the ABC reality show "Wife Swap." Former business partners said Richard Heene wanted a show of his own called "The



Richard and Mayumi Heene arrive at their home in Fort Collins, Colo., on Thursday, November 12, 2009, after making bond on charges against them from the balloon boy hoax. They are both scheduled to enter a guilty plea in court on Friday.

Associated Press

Science Detectives" or "The Psyience Detectives."

Richard Heene, 48, denied the saga was a publicity stunt. Two days later, deputies questioned both parents separately, and authorities said Mayumi Heene admitted the incident was a hoax.

According to an affidavit, Mayumi Heene told an investigator the couple

devised the hoax two weeks before the flight "to make the Heene family more marketable for future media interest." She said they built the balloon specifically for that purpose. Mayumi Heene, 45, also said she and her husband had instructed their three children to lie to authorities and the media, the affidavit said. □

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In this June 10, 1993 file photo, Joaquin Guzman Loera, alias “El Chapo Guzman” is shown to the press after his arrest at the high security prison of Almoloya de Juarez, on the outskirts of Mexico City. Forbes Magazine named drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, a fugitive reputed to be hiding in the mountains of northern Mexico, to its list of the 67 “World’s Most Powerful People” on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009.

Associated Press

JULIE WATSON

Associated Press Writer

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico’s most-wanted drug lord escaped prison by hiding in a laundry truck nearly a decade ago, and his legend and fortune seem to grow with each passing day he eludes

capture.

Now he has reached a new level of fame — or infamy — by making Forbes magazine’s list of the 67 “World’s Most Powerful People.”

Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman is even considered more powerful than Venezuelan

Forbes: Mexico kingpin among world’s most powerful

President Hugo Chavez — No. 67 — and France’s Nicolas Sarkozy — No. 56 — according to Forbes magazine’s list of the 67 “World’s Most Powerful People.” At No. 41, Guzman was just below Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Mexican officials blame Guzman’s cartel for much of the country’s staggering bloodshed. Drug violence has killed nearly 14,000 people since President Felipe Calderon took office in 2006, and more than 2,000 people so far this year in the border city of Ciudad Juarez, where Guzman’s cartel is fighting a turf battle against the Juarez cartel.

“Of course he’s influential, rich and powerful, but he has cost so many lives, so many

youths,” said Gabriela Lopez, a 25-year-old businesswoman in Culiacan, the capital of Sinaloa. “I wish they would make a list pointing out that as well.”

Guzman’s vast drug trafficking empire is worth an estimated \$1 billion, according to Forbes. Yet unlike other, flashier smugglers, few details are known about the Sinaloa cartel boss and the actual power he wields inside his gang. “I think he’s an almost iconic figure in the underworld,” said Don Thornhill, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent who tracked Guzman and other Mexican drug lords during his 25-year career before retiring in 2007. “He’s certainly taken on legendary status because of his jail break. I think he’s pretty savvy at

making the right contacts, knowing the right people to pay off, which is why he has managed to keep going as long as he has.”

Growing up poor, he was drawn to the money being made by the flow of illegal drugs through his home state of Sinaloa.

Guzman joined the Guadalajara cartel, run by Mexican Godfather, Miguel Angel Gallardo.

He rose quickly through the ranks as a ruthless businessman and skilled networker, making key contacts with politicians and police to ensure his loads made it through without problems.

After Gallardo was arrested in 1989, the gang split, and Guzman took control of Sinaloa’s operations. □



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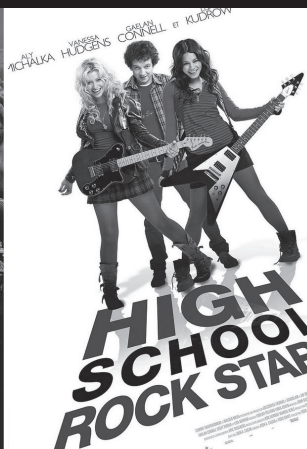
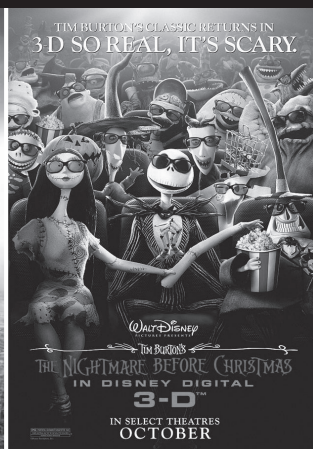
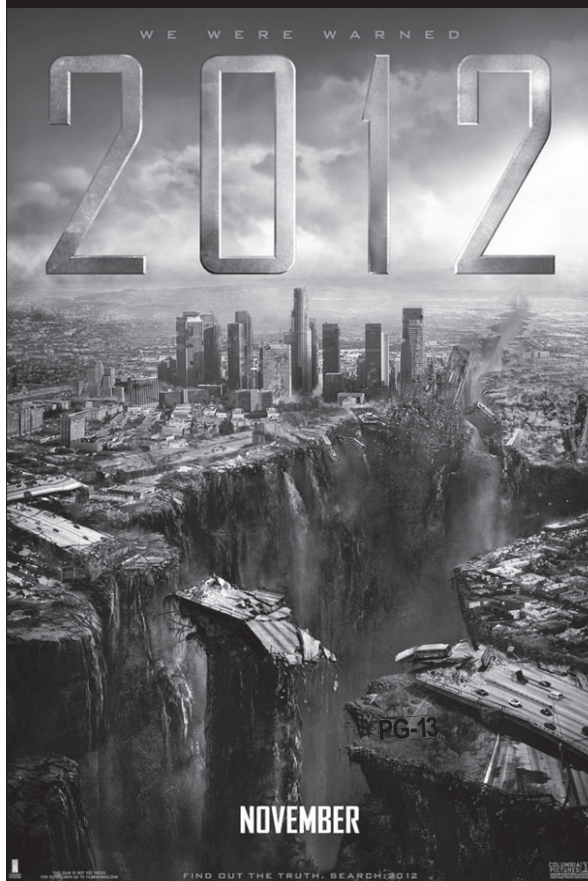
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PG	TIM BURTON'S NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS	daily: 4:00	6:00	7:45	9:30	
NEW		matinee: 12:00	2:00	late show: 11:15		
PG	BANDSLAM	daily: 4:00	6:30			NEW
		matinee: 1:30		late show:		
R	PRECIOUS	daily: 6:00	8:30			
		matinee: 1:00	3:30	late show: 11:00		
PG-13	TENDERNESS	daily:		9:00		
		matinee:		late show: 11:30		
PG-13	PUSH *** THURSDAY THRU SATURDAY ONLY! ***	daily: 5:00	7:30	10:00		
		matinee: 12:00	2:30	late show: 12:30		
PG-13	PUSH *** SUNDAY THRU WEDNESDAY ***	daily: 9:00				
		matinee: 12:00		late show: 11:30		
R	THE STEPFATHER	daily: 4:15	6:45	9:15		
		matinee: 1:00	2:00	late show: 11:45		
PG	THIS IS IT: MICHAEL JACKSON	daily: 6:00	8:30			
		matinee: 1:00	3:30	late show: 11:00		
G	SINTERKLAAS EN HET VERDWENEN PAKJESBOOT	daily: 4:30	6:45			
NEW		matinee: 12:00	2:15	late show: * STARTS SUNDAY *		

AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG	WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE	daily: 5:00	7:15	9:30		NEW
		matinee: 12:30	2:45	late show: 11:45		
PG-13	2012	daily: 4:30	8:00			NEW
		matinee: 1:00		late show: 11:15		
PG	ASTRO BOY	daily: 4:30				
		matinee: 12:00	2:15	late show:		
R	LAW ABIDING CITIZEN	daily: 9:15				
		matinee:		late show: 12:00		
PG	THIS IS IT: MICHAEL JACKSON	daily: 5:45	8:15			
		matinee: 12:45	3:15	late show: 11:00		
PG-13	COUPLES RETREAT	daily: 5:00	7:30	10:00		
		matinee: 12:00	2:30	late show: 12:15		
PG-13	THE STEPFATHER	daily: 9:15				
		matinee:		late show: 11:45		
PG	AMELIA	daily: 6:45	9:15			
		matinee:		late show: 11:45		
PG	A CHRISTMAS CAROL 3D	daily: 4:45	7:00			
		matinee: 12:15	2:30	late show:		

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ABBAS REMAINS

Continued from Page B1

The Palestinian Election Commission ruled Thursday that January's scheduled vote should be put off because of opposition from the Islamic militant group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip and is a rival of Abbas' Fatah faction. Abbas raised international concern last week when he declined to run for another term, suggesting he was frustrated over a 10-month stalemate in Israel-Palestinian peacemaking. His departure would have thrown peace efforts into turmoil.

Now it appears Abbas may have been signaling his need for more backing from the U.S. against Israel since Hamas' rejection of a vote was likely.

The Palestinian Election Commission blamed Gaza's Hamas rulers for forcing the postponement.

Hamas overran Gaza in 2007, expelling Fatah forces loyal to Abbas. Hamas leaders oppose an election organized by Fatah, and without Gaza a complete election cannot be held.

Abbas has insisted that talks with Israel cannot resume until Israel halts all construction in its West Bank settlements. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose hardline Cabinet would not approve such a freeze, countered that the issue should be dealt with in the negotiations.

Talks broke off in January

with no agreement on basic issues.

President Barack Obama's administration is perceived by Palestinians as switching sides, first demanding a construction freeze, then praising Netanyahu's pledge not to build new settlements—though limited construction in existing ones would continue.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who carefully rejected Abbas' demand during a visit to the region two weeks ago, called the no new settlement pledge an "unprecedented concession" on the part of Netanyahu, though Israel originally made that commitment in 2002.

Later, Clinton said the settlement issue would be resolved automatically if the two sides could agree on borders, then repeating U.S. opposition to all Israeli settlements.

Palestinians consider the settlements a huge impediment, taking up land and resources they want for a state and leading Israel to maintain hundreds of roadblocks throughout the West Bank, which stifles their economy and society. All this has left Abbas, already weakened by his loss of Gaza and his lack of popular support, in a difficult position. If he sticks to his position that settlement construction must stop before negotiations resume, talks may remain frozen because of Israel's position.

But if he bends on that key issue to allow renewal of talks, he will be attacked by Hamas, a radical Islamic movement that does not recognize Israel and dismisses peace accords with the Jewish state as capitulation to occupiers.

The election commission did not set a new date, meaning the election is postponed indefinitely.

Recent Palestinian polls showed Hamas and Fatah in a close race in both parliamentary and presidential elections — another possible Fatah motivation for postponing the vote.

Abbas, who was elected in 2005 after the death of legendary Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, has not announced whether he will accept the recommendation of the commission. Fatah insiders say he may leave that up to the umbrella group PLO.

Announcing its decision on Thursday, the election commission said it has closed its offices in Gaza, meaning an indefinite delay.

Hanna Nasser, chairman of the Palestinian election commission, said Hamas refused to cooperate with election workers, making it impossible to hold the Jan. 24 election.

In Gaza, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said his group opposed the election because it was declared by one side. "Without reconciliation, there will be no election," he said



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, center, receives a cluster of grapes from supporters during a Fatah gathering in the West Bank village of Halhul, near Hebron, Sunday, Nov. 8, 2009. Abbas has pushed Mideast peace prospects into unknown territory by announcing he doesn't want another term and opening the way to a succession battle that could play into the hands of his rival, the militant Hamas.

Associated Press

In Syria, Hamas distributed a statement saying the recommendations of election officials show that an earlier decree issued by Abbas to hold elections in January was "illegitimate" because it was taken unilaterally, without Hamas agreement.

Abbas was in neighboring Jordan on Thursday and did not comment. "President Abbas will make the appropriate decision after he returns," said his spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeneh. "Hamas'

decision to ban the election commission from working in Gaza proves that Hamas is not eager to reach national unity and reconciliation."

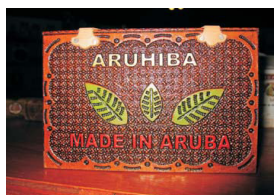
Two senior Fatah officials said the party is divided about whether to pursue further reconciliation talks with Hamas, or eventually hold elections in the West Bank only. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing internal policy discussions.

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APNewsBreak: Diplomats: Iran nuke plant 7-yr old



GEORGE JAHN

Associated Press Writer

VIENNA (AP) — Iran's recently revealed uranium enrichment hall is a highly fortified underground space that appears too small to house a civilian nuclear program, but large enough to serve for military activities, diplomats told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Iran began building the facility near the holy city of Qom seven years ago, and after bouts of fitful construction could finish the project in a year, the diplomats said.

Both the construction timeline and the size of the facility — inspected last month by the International Atomic Energy Agency — are significant in helping shed light on Tehran's

true nuclear intentions.

Iran says it wants to enrich only to make atomic fuel for energy production, but the West fears it could retool its program to churn out fissile warhead material.

One of the diplomats — a senior official from a European nation — said Thursday that the enrichment hall is too small to house the tens of thousands of

centrifuges needed for peaceful industrial nuclear enrichment, but is the right size to contain the few thousand advanced machines that could generate the amount of weapons-grade uranium needed to make nuclear warheads. The pauses in construction may reflect Tehran's determination to keep its activities secret as far back as 2002, when Iran's clandestine nuclear program was revealed.

Citing satellite imagery, the diplomats said Iran started building the plant in 2002, paused for two years in 2004 — the same year it suspended enrichment on an international demand — and resumed construction in 2006, when enrichment was also restarted. Since then, Iran has defied three sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions aimed at forcing it to again freeze uranium enrichment.

All of the diplomats have access to information compiled by the IAEA, and demanded anonymity in exchange for discussing confidential matters with the AP. Iran informed the IAEA only in September that it was building the facility near Qom, leading the U.S., British and French leaders to denounce Tehran for keeping its existence secret. IAEA inspectors visited the plant last month. Iran says it fulfilled its legal obligations over when it revealed the plant's construction, though IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei has said Tehran was "outside the law" and should have informed his agency when the decision to construct was made.

Western officials suspicious of Tehran's nuclear program believe the Islamic Republic only decided to inform the IAEA after it became convinced that the plant's existence had been noted by foreign intelligence services.

The Qom facility is the second known Iranian plant designed for enrichment. The first facility at Natanz, revealed by Iranian dissidents in 2002, has since grown to house around 9,000 centrifuges and has churned enough low-enriched uranium to turn into material for one or two nuclear

warheads.

Low-enriched material is suitable for what Iran says will be a nationwide nuclear power grid. But that stockpile can be enriched further to weapons grade warhead material.

After years of expansion, the Natanz program, which relies on antiquated centrifuges based on black market imports, appears to be running into problems associated with increasing the number of operating centrifuges.

The senior diplomat said Iran was only using about 5,000 of the centrifuges set up at Natanz which were turning out about 80 kilograms — less than 200 pounds — of low-enriched uranium a month. That, he said, amounted to roughly the same output using the same number of machines as in September, when the IAEA last reported on Iran to its 35 board member nations.

He said breakdowns and maintenance of the old centrifuges appeared to account for the stagnation. In contrast, the facility near Qom appears designed to shelter fewer but more modern models configured to churn out more enriched material faster.

International hopes that Iran was ready for at least a partial concession on enrichment were raised after Tehran signaled in early October it was ready to send most of its enriched Natanz stockpile abroad to be turned into metal fuel for its small research reactor. Tehran would have needed at least a year to produce enough new material to replace what it shipped out, thereby delaying its ability to produce weapons-grade uranium should it have chosen to do so.

Since then, however, Iranian officials have overwhelmingly — if unofficially — rejected exporting most of their enriched uranium.

The senior diplomat said nuclear negotiators from the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — the six nations trying to entice Tehran into enrichment concessions — planned to meet next week to discuss further strategy, including the possible threat of new U.N. sanctions on Tehran for its nuclear defiance. □

Cambodia, Thailand expel senior diplomats

SOPHENG CHEANG

Associated Press Writer

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodia and Thailand moved a step further in their sharp dispute over fugitive former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, expelling each other's senior serving diplomats after already ousting ambassadors on both sides.

Thaksin was named an adviser to Cambodia's government on economic affairs last week, causing Thailand to recall its ambassador, with Cambodia following suit. Thaksin then arrived this week for a visit to Cambodia, further straining relations.

On Thursday, they took the spat further with Cambodia giving the first secretary of the Thai Embassy 48 hours to leave the country for carrying out activities inconsistent with his official duties. Cambodian Foreign Ministry spokesman Koy Kuong refused to say what the activities were. Thailand responded by ordering out the first secretary of Cambodia's mission in Bangkok, he said.

Thaksin earlier Thursday accused his detractors of false patriotism following an uproar over his appointment as an adviser by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Speaking to hundreds of Cambodian economists in Phnom Penh, Thaksin said he has much to offer the impoverished country and is hopeful critics in his homeland would see the benefits of an economically stable neighbor.

Thaksin, a former telecommunications billionaire, was ousted by a 2006 military coup for alleged corruption and abuse of power. He fled Thailand last year to escape a conflict of interest conviction and a two-year prison sentence. Critics, including Thailand's current government, have portrayed him as a traitor for accepting the Cambodian appointment and have lambasted Cambodia for hosting him while he is a fugitive.

The appointment further strained relations already roiled by several deadly skirmishes over disputed territory in the past year and a half.

Cambodia rejected a Thai request Wednesday for Thaksin's arrest, saying the legal case against the former leader was politically motivated.

Thaksin insisted in his speech that both countries would gain from his acumen.

"A prosperous neighbor means better opportunities for us to grow together," he said. "Of course, not all my compatriots see it that way right now. Their domestic political compulsions force them to false patriotism. Let's pray that they too will one day appreciate this partnership for progress."

Thaksin's political battle with the current Thai government, which he accuses of being undemocratic, has bitterly divided his country. He retains huge popularity among his rural poor power base who have staged frequent rallies calling for his return to power. □

North Korea threatens South over naval clash

KWANG-TAE KIM

Associated Press Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— Analysts say chances that North Korea will follow through on warnings that it will retaliate against South Korea following their brief-but-bloody naval firefight appear slim ahead of planned talks between the U.S. and Pyongyang.

This week's battle near the disputed western sea border left one North Korean officer dead and three others wounded, according to a senior South Korean military officer. Both sides have accused the other of provoking the two-minute battle and Pyongyang has threatened consequences.

"Warmongers will be forced to pay a costly price," the North's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said Thursday in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. "We never utter empty words."

A North Korean navy patrol vessel is believed to have been towed by another North Korean ship to a nearby base after South Korean ships fired some 4,950 rounds Tuesday, said an official with Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff. He asked not to be identified because of the issue's sensitivity. Yang Moo-jin, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, played down the significance of the North's threats, saying they were carried in newspaper commentaries rather than in government or military statements — which carry more weight.

The North's military issued a statement Tuesday blaming the South for the clash but has not made any threat or mention of retaliation itself. Analysts believe a planned trip to Pyongyang by a U.S. official would make it difficult for Pyongyang to take retaliatory steps against the South anytime soon.

President Barack Obama, due to arrive in Seoul on Nov. 18 amid a regional tour, plans to send special envoy Stephen Bosworth to Pyongyang by year's end for the first direct talks with the North during his administration.

Bosworth's trip is aimed at persuading communist North Korea to return to six-nation nuclear disarmament negotiations, which Pyongyang walked away from earlier this year.

The North has long demanded one-on-one talks with the United States before committing to the stalled talks on ending its nuclear programs. The talks also include South Korea, China, Russia and Japan, and were last held in Beijing in December.

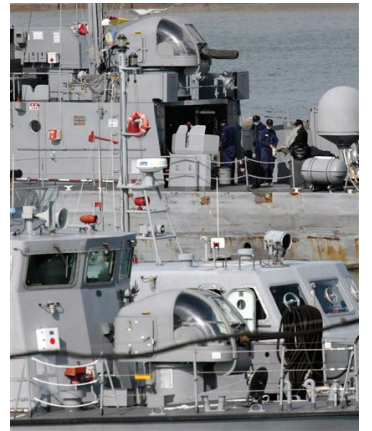
Jeung Young-tae, a North Korea expert at the government-funded Korea Institute for National Unification, said that while some kind of retaliation is

possible, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il would have little to gain from doing so.

"Any escalation of the situation would not be in the interest of the Kim Jong Il regime at a time when the North is focusing on dialogue with the U.S.," he said.

Paik Hak-soon, an analyst at the private Sejong Institute think tank near Seoul, said it is hard to believe that Pyongyang would retaliate when it is seeking to improve its relations with both South Korea and the U.S.

Officials in Seoul shrugged off the North's threats, saying they can deter any aggression and will defend the disputed sea border. It was drawn up by the U.N. command at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. The North has long insisted it be redrawn farther south. The two Koreas have remained technically at war since the Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.



South Korean Navy patrol boats dropped anchors at a naval base in Incheon, South Korea, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009. An official says that South Korean troops are on high alert against possible North Korean retaliation after one of the communist country's navy ships retreated in flames following a skirmish with the South.

Associated Press

The U.S., which has never had diplomatic relations with North Korea, stations 28,500 troops in South Korea to deter potential North Korean aggression. □

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NHL Roundup

Clark's 11th round goal gives Caps shootout win

WASHINGTON (AP)—Chris Clark scored the deciding goal in the 11th round of the shootout, and backup goalie Semyon Varlamov came on in relief and carried the Washington Capitals to a 5-4 comeback victory over the New York Islanders.

Alexander Semin scored two regulation goals for the Capitals, who played their fourth straight game without top scorer Alex Ovechkin (upper body strain), and added one in the second round of the shootout. Semin gave the Capitals a 1-0 lead just 8 seconds in, but the Islanders ended starting goalie Jose Theodore's night with three quick goals. New York scored three times on five shots against Theodore. Varlamov stopped 25 of 26 shots and then sealed the win by denying Mark Streit's shootout attempt in the 11th round.



New York Islanders goalie Dwayne Roloson (30) lets in a goal by Washington Capitals' Chris Clark, not shown, during the shootout of an NHL hockey game, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009, in Washington. The Capitals won 5-4.

At Newark, New Jersey, Jamie Langenbrunner and Zach Parise each had a goal and an assist, and Martin Brodeur made 31 saves as New Jersey extended its winning streak to six games by beating Anaheim.

David Clarkson also scored, and Andy Greene had two assists for the Devils, winners of three straight at home after dropping their first three there. Corey Perry scored for the Ducks and Jonas Hiller made 22 saves.

At Columbus, Ohio, Niklas Kronwall had two power-play goals and an assist and Detroit scored four times early in the first period in a win over Columbus.

Justin Abdelkader tallied two late goals, Dan Cleary, Pavel Datsyuk and Todd Bertuzzi each had a goal and assist, and Kris Draper and Ville Leino also scored for Detroit, which despite major injuries to several key players is 5-1-1 in its last seven games.

Henrik Zetterberg added two assists, and Jimmy Howard made 25 saves to improve to 2-2-1 for the Red Wings.

Rick Nash had the lone goal for Columbus.

At Raleigh, North Carolina, Randy Jones had a goal and an assist in his Los Angeles debut as the Kings extended Carolina's winless streak to 13 games.

Wayne Simmonds, former Hurricane Justin Williams and Ryan Smyth each added a goal and an assist, Jarret Stoll also scored and Anze Kopitar had two assists to give him an NHL-leading 30 points. **In other NHL games it, Washington 5, N.Y. Islanders 4, SO; Los Angeles 5, Carolina 2; Detroit 9, Columbus 1; Buffalo 3, Edmonton 1; New Jersey 3, Anaheim 1; and Chicago 3, Colorado 2, SO.**

Murray loses to Radek Stepanek at Paris Masters

SAMUEL PETREQUIN

AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — A tired Andy Murray lost to Radek Stepanek 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 while a sluggish Rafael Nadal survived another three-setter in the third round of the Paris Masters on Thursday.

Nadal overcame fellow Spaniard Tommy Robredo 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 in 2 hours, 20 minutes, breaking twice in the last three games. Novak Djokovic and defending champion Jo-Wilfried Tsonga enjoyed more routine wins, U.S. Open champion Juan Martin del Potro saved seven match points, and 2006 champ Nikolay Davydenko lost but secured one of the two last spots in the ATP World Tour Finals this month.

The fourth-seeded Murray couldn't overcome a lack of sleep following his three-set win over James Blake that ended at 1:45 a.m. on Thursday. "It's obviously limited recovery after a long match," Murray said. "It's 4 a.m. by the time you get to bed. So it's not perfect preparation for a match. But you still come out and you try and give it your best shot. Wasn't good enough." After dominating the first set even though he didn't think he played that well, Murray was broken early in the second and never recovered. Stepanek, who reached the Paris final in 2004, set up a quarterfinal against fifth-seeded Del Potro.

He and Fernando Gonzalez were at 6-7 (6), 7-6 (6) just before 1 a.m. when Gonzalez retired because of pains in his right knee. The withdrawal ended Gonzalez's hopes of making the ATP



Radek Stepanek, of the Czech Republic, returns the ball to Andy Murray, of Great Britain, during the BNP Masters indoor tennis tournament in Paris, Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009.

Associated Press

finals. The Chilean star squandered seven match points in the second set before losing the tiebreaker.

Robredo broke Nadal for 5-4 in the third set and looked ready to claim his first win in six meetings with Nadal, but he missed two easy forehands to let the former No. 1 back in the match. Nadal, who staved off five match points in the previous round, held serve then broke Robredo again for the match when Robredo dumped another forehand in the net.

"I didn't play my best but it was better than yesterday," said Nadal, trying to win first title since the Rome Masters in May. "I had control of the ball and I was able to play long rallies without making mistakes." □

NBA Roundup

LeBron, Shaq help Cavs to 102-93 win over Magic

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — LeBron James scored 36 points and Shaquille O’Neal provided an inside presence as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Orlando Magic 102-93 on Wednesday in a rematch of the Eastern Conference finals. O’Neal battled boos and bruises to score 10 points and keep Dwight Howard in foul trouble for most of the night, giving James and Co. all the inside strength they sorely lacked last season. Mo Williams added 28 points to help the Cavs take a 15-point

halftime lead, go ahead by 20 after three quarters and roll to an easy victory. Vince Carter had 29 points, and Howard had only 11 points for the Magic. Orlando was without suspended All-Star forward Rashard Lewis. At Boston, the Celtics beat Utah to match their 8-1 start from their NBA title-winning season two years ago. Rajon Rondo had 14 points and 11 assists, Kevin Garnett scored 18 points, Paul Pierce had 13 and Ray Allen 15 for the Celtics.

Deron Williams, who was a game-time decision because of a bruised left calf, had 13 points, seven rebounds and four assists in 33 minutes for Utah. At Phoenix, Amare Stoudemire and Steve Nash combined to hit all eight of their first-quarter shots as Phoenix routed New Orleans to improve to 8-1, matching Boston for the best record in the NBA. Stoudemire finished with 21 points, Grant Hill had 18, and Nash had 12 points and 10

Hornets fire coach Byron Scott

BRETT MARTEL
AP Sports Writer

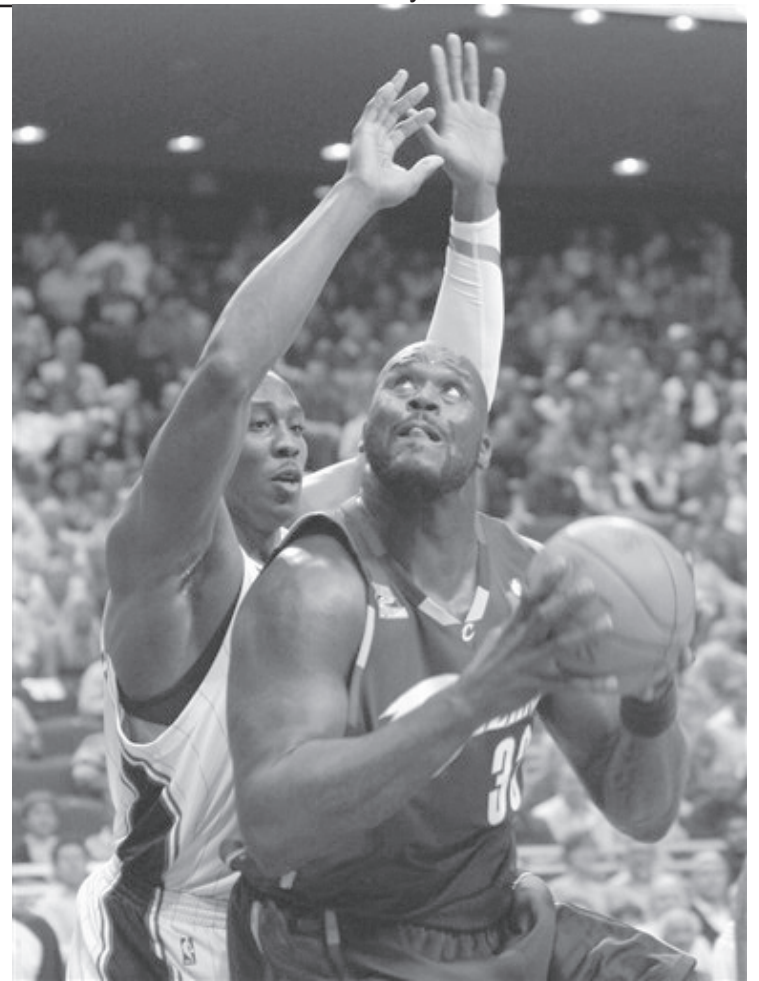
WESTWEGO, Louisiana (AP) — The New Orleans Hornets fired Byron Scott only nine games into the season on Thursday and replaced him with general manager Jeff Bower, hoping the man who put the current roster together can get more out of it on the court. “I told Jeff, ‘The genie’s out of the bottle,’” Hornets chief operating officer Hugh Weber said. “Nobody can say he doesn’t have the right players. ... Jeff has hand-selected this team, and we like the idea that now he’ll be held accountable for the results. “Our expectations are high. Our sense of urgency is high. Our patience is low and we hope that translates into results quickly.” Scott, who only two seasons ago was the NBA coach of the year, was fired one day after a 124-104 loss to Phoenix dropped New Orleans’ record to 3-6. Bower, who also will remain general manager, immediately moved to name Tim Floyd his top assistant. Floyd, a former Hornets head coach, had more recently coached at the University of Southern California. He resigned last

June amid allegations he paid to have O.J. Mayo play for USC. Bower was Floyd’s assistant coach with the Hornets during the 2003-04 season, and the two are still friends. “I have a high comfort level with Tim, who has proven himself to be a quality coach, who has proven himself to have some very specific areas that he’s outstanding in,” Bower said. The Hornets were 41-41 in Floyd’s only season, losing to the Miami Heat in the first round of the playoffs. □



New Orleans Hornets’ Byron Scott looks toward the court as his team plays the Phoenix Suns in the second quarter of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009, in Phoenix. The Suns defeated the Hornets 124-104.

Associated Press



Cleveland Cavaliers center Shaquille O’Neal, right, tries to go up for a shot against Orlando Magic center Dwight Howard during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Orlando, Fla., Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009.

Associated Press

assists. The victory was the Suns’ 12th straight at home, including nine last season. Chris Paul led New Orleans with 25 points. At New York, Al Horford scored a season-high 25 points and had nine rebounds, and Atlanta overcame a 14-point deficit to send New York to its fifth straight loss. Josh Smith added 22 points and 12 rebounds for the Hawks. Toney Douglas scored a season-high 23 points in his first start for the Knicks (1-8), off to their worst start since

also dropping eight of nine in 2002. **In other NBA games it was, Toronto 99, Chicago 89; Indiana 108, Golden State 94; Boston 105, Utah 86; Atlanta 114, New York 101; Philadelphia 82, New Jersey 79; Detroit 98, Charlotte 75; Milwaukee 108, Denver 102; Cleveland 102, Orlando 93; Portland 107, Minnesota 84; Houston 104, Memphis 79; San Antonio 92, Dallas 83; Phoenix 124, New Orleans 104; and Oklahoma City 83, L.A. Clippers 79.** □

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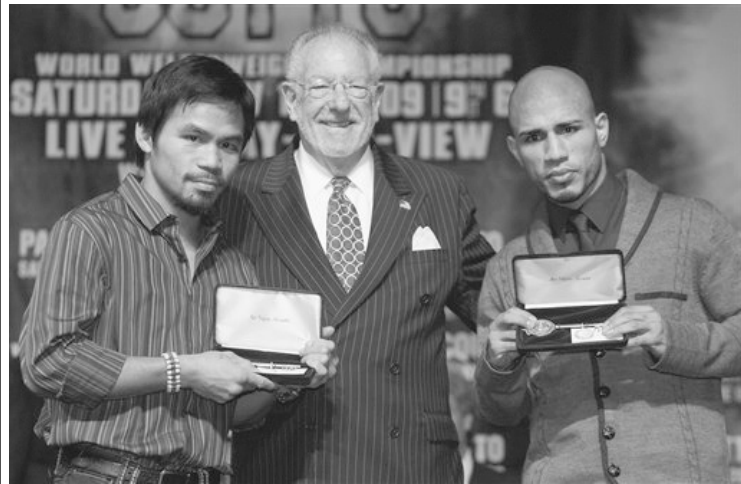
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Cotto knows he's not star of show



Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman, center, presents keys to the city to Miguel Cotto, of Puerto Rico, right, and Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, during a news conference at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009 in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

TIM DAHLBERG**AP Boxing Writer**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Miguel Cotto didn't need to be reminded what his role is supposed to be against Manny Pacquiao.

Not after signing for half the money Pacquiao is getting paid. Not after having to agree to fight nearly a kilo (2 pounds) under his normal weight just to get the fight.

Not after spending months training for a fight a lot of people in boxing don't really believe he has much chance of winning.

Promoter Bob Arum took time at the final prefight press conference to remind him anyway.

"Psychologically he knows it and I know it," Arum said. "In this fight he is not the star of the show."

No, the star of the show is boxing's latest sensation, a mild mannered Filipino who gave Oscar De La Hoya such a beating he quit on the stool and destroyed Ricky Hatton with a single punch. Pacquiao is the face of this event, the boxer who brings the Philippines to a virtual standstill every time he steps into the ring. But Cotto has a country behind him, too. Puerto Rico has long been a breeding ground of top fighters, and this fight is probably the most anticipated in his country since Felix Trinidad won a disputed decision over De La Hoya a decade ago.

Almost lost in the Manny mania that has made this perhaps the most anticipated fight of the year is that Cotto has some serious credentials of his own.

"I don't want to be Manny Pacquiao," Cotto said. "I just want to be Miguel Cotto."

For a long time that was good enough. Cotto was a rising star himself, a relentless puncher who won two titles, knocked

almost everyone in front of him out, and had no trouble selling out Madison Square Garden.

But along came Antonio Margarito and Cotto found himself on the receiving end of the kind of beating he usually handed out. He fought valiantly before finally being stopped in the 11th round of a brutal slugfest, a devastating loss tempered later only by the suspicion that Margarito had plaster inside his gloves like he did in his next fight against Shane Mosley.

"When things about Margarito came out after the fight it made me feel better about the situation," Cotto said.

He came back to win a tuneup fight, then had to rally to beat Joshua Clottey by split decision in the Garden in June. Pacquiao was there at ringside to watch a bloodied Cotto barely pull off a win to retain his piece of the welterweight title, and it wasn't long before negotiations for their fight began.

Though Pacquiao is careful not to say so, his trainer, Freddie Roach, believes Cotto is not the fighter he once was.

"I've studied the tapes of Cotto before and after the Margarito fight and he's not the same person," Roach said. "It's a good time to fight Miguel Cotto."

Odds makers think so, too, making Pacquiao a 2½-1 favorite in a fight that will be held at a catch weight of 66 kilograms (145 pounds), something Cotto had to agree to if he was going to get the fight. Pacquiao wanted the weight concession because he is the smaller fighter, having made his way up from 48 kilos (105 pounds), and fought Hatton at 63½ kilos (140 pounds).

Cotto insists he has put the Margarito fight behind him and is even better than he was before, but there are not only questions about his confidence, but his conditioning. He parted ways with his longtime trainer this year and has been using 32-year-old Joe Santiago, who has no experience in big fights, for the biggest fight of his career.

Pacquiao, whose marathon sparring sessions are legendary, believes that his preparation and his corner will both be factors.

"It's a big help to have a great trainer in your corner," he said.

There aren't as many questions about Pacquiao on the eve of the fight, though there are those in boxing who say he may be getting too much credit for his last two fights because De La Hoya was clearly past his prime and Hatton may have never been ready for prime time. But the body of his work — six titles in six weight classes over the years — and the fact that Roach has managed to turn his right hand into as big a factor as his left hook make Pacquiao dangerous to anyone in front of him. He not only seems to have carried his speed with him as he moved up in weight, but the punch is there too, as evidenced by the tremendous left hook that floored Hatton in the second round of his last fight. □



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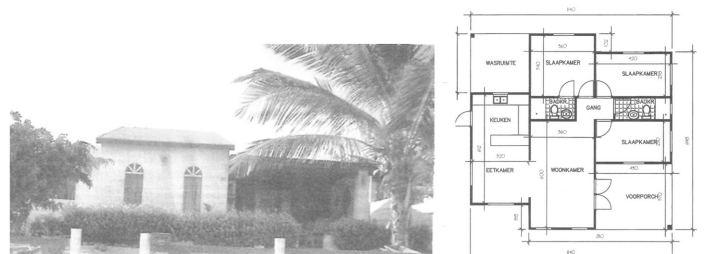
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Gobierno paraguayo refuerza seguridad en conflictiva zona norte

ASUNCION (Reuters) - El Gobierno paraguayo envió el jueves cientos de policías especiales a la conflictiva zona norte del país, fronteriza con Brasil, en un intento de desarticular el grupo armado que mantiene secuestrado a un conocido ganadero.

La decisión fue un punto de inflexión en la investigación del secuestro del ingeniero Fidel Zavala, capturado hace poco menos de un mes en su hacienda del norte por un pequeño grupo de extrema izquierda denominado Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo.

El crimen elevó las críticas al Gobierno del presidente socialista Fernando Lugo y su desenlace podría ser clave en la gestión del mandatario, que enfrenta el acoso de la oposición que controla el Congreso y lo amenaza con un juicio político.

El Ministerio del Interior dijo que la decisión de enviar tropas de élite -unidades entrenadas en rescate de rehenes y patrullaje rural- responde a la necesidad de dar tranquilidad a los pobladores de la zona aumentando la presencia del Estado.

“No vamos a ceder a ningún tipo de chantaje ni tolerar que ningún grupo de delincuentes

pretenda crear territorios liberados en nuestra república. Paraguay no se arrodillará ante organizaciones delictivas”, dijo el ministro Rafael Filizzola.

Pero la familia de Zavala cuestionó el operativo por considerar que pone en peligro la vida del ganadero y podría empantanar las negociaciones para su liberación.

“Les pedimos que se mantengan fuera de esto pero el ministro fue enfático, ellos tienen que proceder. Tenemos mucho miedo de lo que pueda pasar”, dijo Diego Zavala, hermano del secuestrado.

La inseguridad es uno de los principales reclamos de la ciudadanía a Lugo, un ex obispo que terminó con seis décadas de Gobierno del conservador Partido Colorado y se propuso “limpiar” la institución policial, a menudo salpicada por denuncias de corrupción y complicidad con delincuentes.

Miembros del Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo, que opera en una zona de cultivos de marihuana, fueron vinculados con integrantes de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) y señalados como responsables de otros secuestros y ataques a puestos policiales.



El presidente paraguayo, Fernando Lugo, habla en una conferencia de prensa en Asunción, 30 oct 2009. REUTERS/Jorge Adorno

Nuevo cierre de puente colombo-venezolano

BOGOTA (AP) - Las autoridades colombianas confirmaron el jueves un nuevo cierre del paso desde Venezuela a Colombia por un puente fronterizo, pero destacaron que no se han presentado disturbios.

El cierre se produjo cerca de las 7:30 de la mañana (12:30 GMT) en el puente “Francisco de Paula Santander”, que une las poblaciones venezolana de Ureña con la colombiana de Cúcuta, en el departamento de Norte de Santander a 400 kilómetros al noreste de Bogotá.

“La verdad es simplemente que está el puente cerrado, no sabemos exactamente las circunstancias pero sabemos que está cerrado en el sector venezolano”, dijo en entrevista telefónica el coronel Raúl Riaño, comandante operativo de la policía en Norte de Santander.

El oficial aseguró que no se habían presentado disturbios o manifestaciones como se reportaron el fin de semana por parte de pobladores fronterizos.

Protestas el sábado, con manifestantes lanzando piedras a agentes de la guardia nacional venezolana, desembocaron en el cierre por unas cinco horas del puente “Simón Bolívar”, otro de los pasos de frontera. Los manifestantes se quejaban de medidas de seguridad como intensos chequeos aplicados por la guardia al momento de cruzar.

Nicaragua anuncia protesta contra líder liberal holandés

MANAGUA (AP) - El gobierno de Nicaragua enviará al Parlamento Europeo una nota de protesta contra el presidente de la Internacional Liberal, el holandés Hans van Baalen, informó el miércoles el vicecanciller Manuel Coronel Kautz, que lo acusó de injerencia en asuntos de política interna.

En rueda de prensa, Coronel Kautz desechó declaraciones de Van Baalen, que había declarado que fue conminado por las autoridades a abandonar el país.

Aseguró que el gobierno “no quiere ofender al Parlamento Europeo”.

El canciller anunció que se enviará una nota de protesta a dicho parlamento por el “comportamiento injerencista” de Van Baalen. En una conferencia de prensa, el funcionario holandés declaró que “el viceministro (del exterior) del gobierno sandinista, Valdrak Jaentschke, me dijo que debía salir del país porque yo estoy entrometiéndome en asuntos internos de Nicaragua”.

Más tarde la Cancillería nicaragüense emitió un comunicado disculpándose por las declaraciones de Coronel Kautz a los periodistas

durante una conferencia de prensa en la que llamó “paisucho” a Holanda. El vicecanciller dijo en una grabación difundida por el Canal 10 de la televisión local que “Holanda es un paisucho comparado con Alemania”.

La Cancillería aclaró que “las expresiones vertidas” por Coronel Kautz “se dieron en el contexto del injerencismo demostrado” por van Baalen. Dijo sin embargo que éste “al parecer vino a Nicaragua como emisario de potencias intervencionistas extranjeras, olvidándose que las nuevas formas de injerencia y opresión están siendo rechazadas por los pueblos, particularmente en África, América Latina y el Caribe”.

La Cancillería recordó que “Holanda ha sido solidaria con Nicaragua en los momentos más difíciles de nuestra historia”. Van Baalen arribó al país el lunes para reunirse con dirigentes de la dividida corriente liberal, a quienes exhortó a unirse contra el gobierno del presidente Daniel Ortega. En la rueda de prensa insistió que su llegada a Nicaragua fue para ayudar a los partidos liberales a que ganen las elecciones, como en cualquier parte del mundo.



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